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APPROACHES TO L'IMMACULEE CONCEPTION

by

Shelley Quinn

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled APPROACHES TO L'IMMACULEE CONCEPTION submitted by Shelley Quinn in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the surreal prose poem L'Immaculée Conception, published in 1930 by André Breton and Paul Eluard. The study begins with a brief introduction to the work in which I provide my reasons for examining it, followed by an outline of its more salient features. The three successive chapters approach the work from different perspectives, but all three may be related to André Breton's statement that "Tout porte à croire qu'il existe un certain point de l'esprit d'où la vie et la mort, le réel et l'imaginaire, le passé et le futur, le communicable et l'incommunicable, le haut et le bas cessent d'être perçus contradictoirement."[1]

Chapter I considers the text in the light of its relationship to Alejo Carpentier's magically real text Los Pasos perdidos with specific emphasis on the idea of the quest motif in the two works. The possible genetic relationship between the texts is also explored through a short historical survey.

Chapter II examines the relationship between the surreal and the psychiatric view of madness as proposed by the Surrealists Breton and Eluard, and the psychiatrist R.D. Laing. The aim of the chapter is to explicate the section "Les Possessions" by studying it in conjunction with the theoretical and artistic writings of Laing.

Chapter III turns to the problems involved in the reading and translation of L'Immaculée Conception and how these problems make the

text rather problematic in nature. By doing so it attempts to answer the question in the introduction of why such an important text has never received the critical recognition which it deserves.

NOTES

[1] André Breton, Les Manifestes du surréalisme (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), p. 76.

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INTRODUCTION

L'Immaculée conception, published in 1930 by André Breton and Paul Eluard, initially caused great excitement in the literary world. Congratulations were awarded the proud parents of this new "automatic" being, but the furor soon evaporated and L'Immaculée Conception sank unheralded into a restless grave. For whatever reason the critics avoided this text, the result has been the same--an unexorcised ghost haunts the house of the surreal. What happened to the book which was greeted by such laudatory comments as Louis Laloy's "titre bien dû à la pureté originelle d'une pensée toujours vierge, sans attachement terrestre, ni souillure d'intérêt,"[1] or René Baranger's "A. Breton et Paul Eluard nous présentent dans leur dernier ouvrage: L'Immaculée Conception, des simulations extrêmement remarquables de la débilité mentale, de la manié aiguë, de la paralysie générale, du délire d'interprétation et de la démence précoce. Preuve de la toute-puissance de la pensée et remède efficace à la vie courante qu'un pragmatisme imbécile voudrait diviniser,"[2] or Rolland de Renéville's "Le livre le plus important que le surréalisme nous ait donné depuis le Second Manifeste est sans aucun doute L'Immaculée Conception. Breton et Eluard y ont tenté la réconstruction de l'existence humaine dans sa totalité, depuis la conception jusqu'à la mort."[3] As recently as 1964, the noted critic Roger Shattuck remarked that too many experimental works like L'Immaculée Conception have gone unexamined.[4] These are

examples of reviews which, were literary criticism to follow any sort of logical pattern, certainly should have led to many detailed studies, if not entire books, dedicated to unravelling the mysteries of its form, its content, its contribution to and its place in the movement of Surrealism. Yet despite its favourable notices and the obvious wealth of material lying within its pages waiting to be examined and explored, L'Immaculée Conception has been left virtually untouched, with the exception of a few general remarks which could apply equally well to almost any work written round the 1930's by any Surrealist, and the occasional casually tossed accolade which, however well intentioned the endower may have been, does little to clarify the murky layers of years of neglect.

Although this thesis may well face accusations that too many years have gone by, that L'Immaculée Conception has become a dead weight probably impossible to resuscitate, and that no resuscitation attempted in one hundred-odd pages can hope to produce more than a few sputtering gasps from the subject, it does, I believe, appear to be worthwhile if only to bring other better qualified critics into the fray. For the purpose of giving L'Immaculée Conception maximum exposure, this thesis will be divided into three major areas of concentration, all of which are, at least in part, intended to invite arguments from respective specialists. The principal point of departure and the standard reference point from which I hope to link these chapters into a reasonably coherent whole will be the idea of the exploration of a different dimension of reality where "Tout porte à croire qu'il existe un certain point de l'esprit d'où la vie et la

mort, le réel et l'imaginaire, le passé et le futur, le communicable et l'incommunicable, le haut et le bas cessent d'être perçus contradictoirement."[5] The text L'Immaculée Conception may be understood and examined as part of the surrealists' quest to attain this point.

Before proceeding to the first chapter, a brief outline of L'Immaculée Conception itself, accompanied by some relevant technical information about its actual composition might be in order. A more in-depth discussion of content will be contained within the chapters themselves.

Basically the text appears to have been an attempt to reconstruct, from the surrealist point of view and utilizing surrealist techniques, the entire spectrum of human existence. It is divided into four major sections entitled "L'Homme," "Les Possessions," "Les Médiations," and "Le Jugement originelle," the first three of which have further subdivisions while the fourth stands as an undivided unit. Each of these major sections could exist on its own as a reasonably comprehensive and coordinated literary text, but when combined they form what is, perhaps, the most complex and detailed textual evidence of the surrealist movement. Considered as an inter-related, if not totally integrated whole, this work deals either directly or indirectly with virtually every facet of what is often called the human condition.

To summarize as briefly as possible, the first section "L'Homme" is divided into five parts: "La Conception," "La Vie intra-utérine," "La Naissance," "La Vie," and "La Mort." "L'Homme" is a particularly depressing chapter and as is evidenced by its subtitles shows the cycle of a human existence in contemporary society seen through surreal eyes.

The only suggestion of liberty from the prison of existence comes at the time of death since only death releases the individual from life's "menottes du sourire."[6]

The second major section of L'Immaculée Conception, "Les Poses-sions," is dedicated to the simulation of various deviations of the human mind which are often classified under the general heading of mad-ness. In this chapter Breton and Eluard set out to simulate various dementias in an attempt to prove that "l'esprit, dressé poétiquement chez l'homme normal, est capable de reproduire dans ses grands traits les manifestations verbales les plus paradoxales, les plus excentriques, qu'il est au pouvoir de cet esprit de se soumettre à volonté les prin-cipales idées délirantes sans qu'il y aille pour lui d'un trouble durable, sans que cela soit susceptible de compromettre en rien sa faculté d'équilibre."[7]

The introduction to this section was written solely by André Breton, and in combination with the following simulations constitutes a much more ferocious attack against the sane/insane dichotomy asserted by the psychiatric profession than any previous surrealist work, in-cluding Nadja. The five mental illnesses simulated in "Les Possessions" are:

1. la débilité mentale
2. la manie aiguë
3. la paralysie générale
4. le délire d'interprétation
5. la démence précoce

These mental illnesses are simulated in order of increasing severity, of the extent to which they penetrate the individual's unconscious, and the extent to which they affect his behaviour. As the severity of

the dementia increases, the imagery and the sentence structure become increasingly difficult to comprehend on any analytical level. Perhaps a suggestion might be offered at this time that while "L'Homme" shows man's conscious life, or the actuality to which he is bound, "Les Possessions" shows his unconscious life, or the potentiality into which he may escape.

The third section, "Les Médiations," attempts to integrate the actuality and potentiality dimensions of life into one sur-reality. "Les Médiations" is subdivided into six parts:

1. la force de l'habitude
2. la surprise
3. il n'y a rien d'incompréhensible
4. le sentiment de la nature
5. l'amour
6. l'idée du devenir

All of these can be seen as relating back to the conscious and the unconscious dimensions of existence found in "L'Homme" and "Les Possessions." Each of the forces explored in "Les Médiations" forms an integral part of the development of the individual in society, and the extent to which the different forces govern his life largely determines his external behaviour and perhaps even his thought. The six sections appear, at first glance, to be paired in a contradictory manner. "La force de l'habitude" may suffer from the intrusion of and subsequent disruption by "La Surprise." The idea that "Il n'y a rien d'incompréhensible" may appear to be negated by its juxtaposition with "Le Sentiment de la nature," for the vastness and the constant variation of nature seems to preclude complete understanding of it. Finally, the continual motion of striving which is inherent in "L'Idée du devenir"

contrasts strangely with the romantic and commonly accepted notion of "L'amour" as an end in itself. However, each of these contrasting and complementary human experiences serves to accentuate the finer, often concealed and usually unrecognized virtues and faults of the other. If experienced and explored in great enough depth from new--in this case surrealist--perspectives, perhaps they can be seen as minor transforming forces which need not be contradictory. An understanding of the actuality and the potentiality which they contain may eventually lead to the fusion of these experiences and thus to a fuller life. The idea of the process of coming into existence or of becoming, the search for and the exploration of knowledge, is appropriately the last mediation before "Le Jugement originel," for it is that process which, above all else, characterized the surrealist movement in France.

The last section of L'Immaculée Conception, "Le Jugement originel," is both an end and a new beginning, since it concludes the text while in content it carries the promise of another chance at life from the knowledge gained in the preceding three sections. The title itself carries a strong parodic echo of the famous biblical Last Judgement and could be considered as the final stage in the journey from: (1) a not so idyllic Eden, (2) through a finite mortal life, (3) to unconscious experiences, (4) to mediations of those experiences and, (5) finally ending or beginning with the possibility of the discovery of transcendent values, or of rebirth. It attempts, in short, to present some of the knowledge and some of the questions from which an individual could begin a new existence, freed from society's superstitions and restrictions. A conception based upon

"Le Jugement originelle" would be original and perhaps even, by surrealist standards, immaculate.

The following chapters will concern themselves in greater depth with several of the aspects brought forward within this outline of L'Immaculée Conception.

The first chapter of "Approaches to L'Immaculée Conception" is entitled "The Search for a Beginning: From Surrealism to Magical Realism"; it is basically a comparative study of L'Immaculée Conception by André Breton and Paul Eluard and Los Pasos perdidos[7] by Alejo Carpentier. It attempts to use the more readily comprehensible magical realist text to explicate further the surrealist work by mapping the quest motif in the respective works. Naturally, in order to justify such an attempt, Magical Realism will be discussed briefly to point out affinities and genetic relationships between the two movements. The major differences between Surrealism and Magical Realism will also be drawn out since it is these differences which make the latter easier to understand.

The next stage must be to examine Alejo Carpentier's ties to Surrealism. From biographical data we know that although Carpentier is recognized primarily for his work in Magical Realism he also spent several years writing with the surrealist group in France. A question which arises is whether or not he carried this influence with him when he left the group. After exploring Carpentier's actual relationship to Surrealism, I wish to provide a short textual analysis of Los Pasos perdidos using the idea of a journey in the quest to find a new, more meaningful life or rebirth. The quest in L'Immaculée Conception will

then be traced and examined, using Carpentier's text to provide the missing links, or the lost steps, in the surrealist work. Hopefully, this comparative examination will show how L'Immaculée Conception, like Los Pasos perdidos, can be understood as a journey into the marvelous realm in a quest to find a point where a re-birth is possible, where man attains the knowledge which will allow him to find purity within himself and the world around him.

The second chapter entitled "Surrealism and Madness" studies "Les Possessions" in L'Immaculée Conception in conjunction with theoretical and literary writings of the psychiatrist Ronald David Laing. Surrealism was influenced by and interested in psychiatry and we find evidence of the interest manifested most strongly in "Les Possessions." Conversely, psychiatry has shown some interest in Surrealism, both formally and perhaps also through the process of osmosis, as may have been the case with the well known Dr. Laing. Like the Surrealists, Laing is deeply concerned with the alienation of man in society and he too is attempting to facilitate the destruction of the dichotomy between sanity and madness. Since Laing and the Surrealists have at least this much in common, the first part of the chapter will attempt to determine, first of all, the theoretical convergences of the psychiatrist and the Surrealists. When these convergences have been found, if indeed they do exist, a textual study of Laing's literary effort, The Bird of Paradise, will be presented, since this work, like L'Immaculée Conception supposedly has its roots in the unconscious mind.

In these literary texts Laing and the Surrealists are attempting to journey into the unconscious dimension of mind in their quests to

find ways of healing the fissure between the conscious and the unconscious. However, since Laing is more explicit about his journey and since his work conforms to a somewhat greater degree to conscious logic, The Bird of Paradise is less difficult to understand than is L'Immaculée Conception's "Les Possessions." By using Laing as a guide, an attempt will be made to follow the journey into madness which the Surrealists made, and in order to do so a short textual analysis or interpretation of the various simulations of madness in the surreal text will be presented. Through the examination of these texts, certain artistic divergences become apparent which, in spite of the theoretical convergences, show that L'Immaculée Conception is less subject to actuality/conscious control than is The Bird of Paradise. This examination allows us to develop a greater understanding of the aims and the content of "Les Possessions," since it gives some of the psychological background which the Surrealists have not provided within either their theoretical or their literary writings. By relating the known and the comprehensible to the unknown and the incomprehensible, perhaps we will gain a better understanding of what the Surrealists claimed is a point where madness and sanity cease to be perceived as contradictions.

The third and final chapter is entitled "The Quest for Understanding: Reading and Translation of L'Immaculée Conception." It is an attempt to show that traditional translation procedures are not viable for or even fair to this surrealist text, but that it may be translated in a limited fashion if these procedures can be modified. (Perhaps because of the fact that translators have used traditional methods,

L'Immaculée Conception has never been completely translated.) Part of the problem with L'Immaculée Conception and other co-authored automatic texts stems from the way in which language is used to create them, and thus the introductory discussion will be centered primarily upon denotative, connotative and associative aspects of language. This, in combination with the concept of language paradigms, is intended to lay a foundation for the ensuing examination of some of the problems encountered in an initial and a subsequent translation of L'Immaculée Conception. Since reading is the primary step in any translation process, some attention will be paid to the ways in which co-authored automatic writing may be misread with special attention paid to the idea of textual reduction.

Before discussing the actual translation practice as it applies to Breton and Eluard's work, a very brief sketch of the major types of translations will be presented in order to show why the techniques involved in such translations cannot produce satisfactory results with L'Immaculée Conception. Since, unlike most other literature, automatic works often rely more upon sound than upon content, the emphasis must be laid upon the reproduction of sound effect in the secondary text. However, in any one translation either sound or content must be subordinated, and in L'Immaculée Conception the sound and the content cannot be separated without disrupting the exploration and the quest in the work. Consequently, a special way of translating such texts must be found if they are not to remain forever within unilingual boundaries.

The reader of this thesis might wonder why these three approaches were chosen in preference to others such as the mythopoeic and linguistic ones. Naturally, the areas chosen reflect my own personal bias, but the major reason for the decision to use these three particular approaches is more closely related to the desire to give L'Immaculée Conception maximum exposure--to allow it to take its rightful place on the literary battlefield. Magical Realism, R.D. Laing, and psychiatry, and of course translation theory/practice are well known. The first two approaches refract L'Immaculée Conception's light through a prism that separates two components which are close to the invisible colour of the surreal text. When recombined they illuminate its darkness with a kind of infra-red. In this way, I have found some themes in the work which otherwise were not evident. After thematic study, comes study of form. The third approach closes this study while simultaneously returning to offer an answer to the original problem of the thesis: why has such a highly praised work not been studied before?

If this thesis shows L'Immaculée Conception to be more comprehensible when considered from these perspectives and if it shows this text to be worthy of established critics' attention and time, then it will have achieved its goal.

NOTES

[1] Louis Laloy in L'Ere nouvelle, collected in Paul Eluard, Les Oeuvres complètes (Paris: Gallimard, 1968), p. 1424. Other "comptes rendus" are collected in this volume.

[2] Ibid., pp. 1424-1425.

[3] Rolland de Renéville, "Dernier Etat de la poésie surréaliste," in La Nouvelle Revue Française, 1 janvier 1932, pp. 285-291.

[4] Maurice Nadeau, History of Surrealism, trans. with introduction by Roger Shattuck (New York: Macmillan, 1965), p. 34.

[5] André Breton, Les Manifestes du surréalisme (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), p. 76.

[6] André Breton and Paul Eluard, L'Immaculée Conception (Paris: Seghers, 1961), p. 19.

[7] André Breton also entitled one of his works Les Pas perdus (Paris: Gallimard, 1924), and although the idea is pure conjecture, perhaps Carpentier took the title for his work from the earlier surreal text.

CHAPTER I

THE SEARCH FOR A BEGINNING: FROM SURREALISM TO MAGICAL REALISM

The term "Magischer Realismus" originated in the 1920's with the German art critic Franz Roh, who used it to describe an art movement which had developed as a reaction against Expressionism and which, according to him, was characterized by "the appearance of everyday objects in such a strange atmosphere that, although recognizable, they shock us as if they were fantastic."[1] Despite the fact that Roh stressed the differences between Magical Realism and Surrealism, the similarities between the two styles and the debt that Magical Realism owes to Surrealism are undeniable. The term "Magical Realism" never achieved the great fame and enduring notoriety in the art world that it enjoys today after its adoption by literary circles. However, some of the confusion still surrounding the term may date from various critical-artistic interpretations relating specifically to painting.

Its earliest recorded application was in 1928 when Anibal Sanchez Reulet, while speaking to Enrique Anderson Imbert, said that Les Enfants terribles, by Jean Cocteau, was "puro realismo magico."[2] A. Uslar Pietri first applied the term directly to Latin American literature when examining the short narrative of the post-modernist era:

> Lo que vino a predominar en el cuento y a marcar su huella de una manera perdurable fue la consideración del hombre como misterio en medio de los datos realistas. Une adivinación poética o una negación poética de la realidad. Lo que a falta de otra palabra podría llamarse un realismo magico.[3]

Later, Alejo Carpentier--himself a magical realist writer--employed the words "lo real maravilloso" to describe what is better known today as Magical Realism.. In the prologue to his work El Reino de este mundo he wrote:

> 1. que hay una literatura maravillosa de orígen europeo, referida a acontecimientos sobrenaturales
> 2. que la realidad americana es más maravillosa que esa literatura y, por lo tanto, cabe hablar de lo real maravilloso americano
> 3. que lo real maravilloso de América podrá trasladarse a la literatura solamente a condición de que los escritores tengan fe en que esa América es realmente maravillosa (o maravillosamente real)[4]

Angel Flores, a leading critic, views Magical Realism as being almost solely a reaction against the dry realism which preceded it, attributing its actual point of departure to Luís Borges' work Historia universal de la infamia (1935).[5] He cites, as precursors of the movement, Marcel Proust, Georgio di Chirico and Franz Kafka, using the latter's "The Metamorphosis" as a case in point. Basically he defines Magical Realism as a blend of realism and fantasy, both of which are firmly rooted in the Latin American and the European literary traditions. This element of fantasy, he believes, tends to make it escapist writing.[6] When summarizing his conception of Magical Realism, Flores says:

> It is predominantly an art of surprises. From the very first line the reader is thrown into a timeless flux and/or the inconceivable, freighted with dramatic suspense... From then on the narrative moves smoothly, translucently bound for an infinite, timeless perspective... Time exists in a kind of timeless fluidity and the unreal happens as part of reality... Once the reader accepts the fait accompli

> the rest follows with logical precision... The practitioners of magical realism cling to reality as if to prevent literature from getting in their way, as if to prevent their myth from flying off, as in fairy tales, to supernatural realms. The narrative proceeds in well prepared, increasingly intense steps, which ultimately may lead to one great ambiguity or confusion, to a confusion within clarity... All the magical realists have this in common, as well as their repudiation of that mawkish sentimentalism which pervades so many of the Latin American classics... The magical realists do not cater to a popular taste, rather they address themselves to the sophisticated, those not merely initiated in aesthetic mysteries but versed in subtleties.[7]

Clearly, Magical Realism, by Flores' definition, bears strong similarities to Surrealism--similarities to which I will later return. Luís Leal, another well known critic, strongly objects to Flores' definition of Magical Realism--especially to his contention that it is escapist writing.[8] In contrast to Flores' accusation that the Magical Realists create a new reality, Leal argues that their writings show an attitude towards reality and that the emphasis is not in the creation of imaginary worlds, but rather in the discovery of the mysterious relation that exists between man and his environment/ circumstances. In the works of these authors, he maintains that the mysterious is not justified, it is explored. To find these mysteries the magical realist writer attempts to expand his senses and his sensitivity to a state which permits him to explore the unknown and the inexplicable shades of the external world. In conclusion, Leal says that the attitude of the magical realist writer is to face reality, not by creating imaginary worlds in which to take refuge from daily reality, but by discovering the mysterious in objects, life and human actions.[9]

The eminent hispanist Jean Franco agrees with Leal that Magical Realism faces reality, and attempts to decipher its mystery.[10] She also believes that "lo real maravilloso" is not so much a school of writing as a conviction held by a number of authors that American reality is of a different order from that of Europe. She introduces the idea of historical/political development into the definition of Magical Realism by saying that:

> They [the writers] came from pre-industrial areas and this factor makes it important to distinguish them from the European Surrealists, who also celebrated the marvellous but did so in reaction to an industrialized society which had imposed its own grey, mechanistic standards.[11]

Clearly, proposing a definitive and comprehensive definition of the phenomenon of Magical Realism is a truly ambitious task and would not, for the purposes of this thesis, be a feasible or even a productive undertaking. Instead, I wish to extract those ideas, already underlined, which could pertain to both Surrealism and Magical Realism and which could be of use in a mutually illuminative comparative textual study of L'Immaculée Conception (Surrealism) and Los Pasos perdidos (a novel by the Cuban author Alejo Carpentier which typifies Magical Realism). According to the critics, this Spanish American movement:

1. is European in origin (from the French Surrealists)
2. is an art of surprises (Surrealism's le hasard)
3. shows evidence of a timeless flux, the inconceivable, and develops an infinite, timeless perspective (characteristic of Surrealism at its best)
4. may lead to ambiguity or confusion (one of the greatest complaints of the opponents of Surrealism)
5. does not cater to popular tastes (Surrealism is often accused of being elitist)
6. shows an attitude towards reality, rather than a literary flight from it (Claessens, in his article "Introduction à la lecture d'Eluard," said exactly the same thing about Surrealism).[12]

7. explores the unknown in external reality (Surrealism explores the unknown in internal reality in order to understand better external reality)
8. celebrates and believes in the power of "lo real maravilloso" (the Surrealists sought to find inspiration in "le merveilleux").

Before attempting to determine the textual similarities between the two texts, a brief survey of Alejo Carpentier's actual historical bonds with the French Surrealists will be presented. In addition to providing general background material, this survey is intended partially as a justification for the attempt to explicate further L'Immaculée Conception by using a more comprehensible text which, although belonging to a different movement, is trying to do much the same thing as Breton and Eluard's work.

FROM SURREALISM TO MAGICAL REALISM VIA ALEJO CARPENTIER

Alejo Carpentier's first contact with the French surrealist movement came in 1928 when he met Robert Desnos at the seventh Congreso de la Prensa Latina in Havana. Desnos invited Carpentier to return to Paris with him, and after having illegally boarded a boat, they set sail for France.[13] It was through Desnos that Carpentier first met André Breton, the self-appointed leader of the Surrealists. Favourably impressed with the Cuban, Breton invited Carpentier to contribute to the publication La Révolution surréaliste, but there has been no evidence to date that suggests Carpentier accepted the invitation. However, it is known that he wrote various articles and poems for Documents and L'Intransigeant, both Surrealist publications.[14] While in France and

in such close contact with the Surrealists, Carpentier had the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the aims, the successes and the pitfalls of such a movement. His initial impressions of Surrealism were favourable and he was deeply interested in and sympathetic towards Breton's First Manifesto--almost to the extent of eulogizing it.[15] Yet, not too long after, Carpentier began to take strong exception to Breton's dogmatic controls which seemed to be against the very nature of the movement itself (at least according to the spirit of the First Manifesto, since the more formal introduction of discipline into the movement came later), and he grew increasingly dissatisfied during the crisis of 1929 when Breton took it upon himself to expel certain dissidents from the group in a fashion reminiscent of the Spanish Inquisition. Only one year later, in January of 1930, Carpentier was one of a group who were excommunicated. There are several known reasons for the deterioration of the relationship between Breton and Carpentier which resulted in this expulsion. In the first place, Carpentier had gravely offended Breton some months earlier saying that Surrealism in South America was principally known through the works of Paul Eluard.[16] In the second place, Carpentier was one of twelve disgruntled Surrealists who collaborated on a publication entitled Un Cadavre which severely attacked Breton. Obviously this rupture formally ended his ties with the official Surrealist group, but it did not mean a rejection of the Surrealist mode. Rather, it led to what was, in some respects, the americanization of Surrealism; it led to Magical Realism.

From the theoretical and the practical writings of Alejo Carpentier and others such as Jean Franco, Angel Flores, Luís Leal, and E. Dale

Carter, the reader can see that Magical Realism concerns itself with the exploration of the possible, the probable, the visible, and the invisible dimensions of reality--dimensions which were either rejected or ignored by virtually all other movements except Surrealism. One of the principle motives for conducting such an exploration was the search for le merveilleux. The marvellous was, according to Breton and many of his disciples, including Carpentier, the fountain of literary inspiration. The attempt to find it involved many different procedures, the most famous of which are the exploration and the examination of dreams, the return to uncontaminated innocence (childhood), automatic writing, the juxtaposition of images and the fracturing of our usual concept of time. The Surrealists sought to find le merveilleux in themselves, in the unconscious workings of their minds; the Magical Realists sought it in the elements which surrounded them, in nature. This act of exploration which the Surrealists undertook had as its goal greater freedom--freedom from the constraints of society and freedom from one-dimensional, limiting literature. Carpentier inherited Breton's belief in the importance of liberty in the creation of literature to such an extent that he wrote:

> Concedidas todas las licencias la imaginación, la imagen adquiere una amplitud, una brillantez, una novedad, insospechosa. La poesía galopa vertiginosamente sobre esas imágenes--parcelas de infinito--que sólo los surrealistas supieron crear con tal intrepidez y prodigalidad. Sus poemas nos revelan un mundo de milagros cuyas puertas acaban apenas de abrirse para nuestra sensibilidad.[17]

Another common preoccupation in both movements is the desire to transcend individual, enclosed existence, to transcend the reality that is known and accepted in order to explore a greater reality, a reality

where, in the words of André Breton, "Tout porte à croire qu'il existe un certain point de l'esprit d'où la vie et la mort, le réel et l'imaginaire, le passé et le futur, le communicable et l'incommunicable, le haut et le bas cessent d'être perçus contradictoirement."[18] Both Surrealism and Magical Realism see the human condition in the outer/objective world as having become rigid and empty because of the split between potentiality and actuality and feel that a new, integrative means of understanding must be found. This understanding can only be attained through experimental exploration in mental and literary realms. The exploration entails a journey into unknown and sometimes frightening new dimensions of mind; it requires the courage to face and to explore reality.

Peter G. Earle identifies the quest-voyage as the fundamental structure in the contemporary novel,[19] and neither Surrealism nor Magical Realism presents an exception in the structural sense. Earle cites as some of the structure's numerous antecedents The Odyssey, Don Quixote, and The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. If we look at literature from the time of Baudelaire, we also find this quest-voyage motif in Modernist, imagery-oriented poetry. Therefore, it should not be surprising that we encounter this structuring element in the fusion of these two modes. The prose poem, L'Immaculée Conception, like the novel Los Pasos perdidos, is developed on the basis of the voyage-quest.

Before Modernism and especially before Surrealism, this quest usually involved the protagonist struggling against an external concrete force and frequently was a battle between the protagonist and the

antagonist or the protagonist and nature. Generally the protagonist won. However, with the introduction of Freudian theories into the literary realm and the subsequent experimentation with them, a notable variation of this quest was produced. The Surrealists internalized the quest to a far greater extent than any of their predecessors, taking it out of the objective or the "real" world and embarking upon a voyage of discovery within themselves, without providing the reader with exterior references. The Surrealist quest, like many more externalized quests, is for liberty, but in their case liberty of the mind takes precedence over mere corporeal liberty. Many Surrealists believe that liberation from the restrictions imposed upon their minds and the resulting greater understanding would, quite naturally, result in freedom from other barriers. The Surrealists are revolutionaries in the sense that they wish to destroy conventional and limiting associations by liberating images of desire and of transformation/transcendence. They are basically a consciousness-raising group, hoping to create a situation where poetry is realized in life itself, and where the unconscious realm of le merveilleux is translated into the conscious, cognizant reality of the external world.

This internalization of the quest, and its resulting difference in dimensional perceptions, which could yield a greater reality where potentiality and actuality are reconciled is, perhaps, the greatest debt that Magical Realists owe to the Surrealist experience. The following textual survey and brief analysis will use as its major point of departure the idea of the inner quest as it appears in L'Immaculée Conception and Los Pasos perdidos. Hopefully, by examining the quest

for lo maravilloso in the magically real text with its external references and more readily comprehensible pattern, the surreal text L'Immaculée Conception with le merveilleux will be somewhat illuminated.

The works Los Pasos perdidos and L'Immaculée Conception share one very important goal. The quest in both works is primarily concerned with helping man find that point where things cease to be understood as contradictions, in helping man discover a world where nature is comprehensible and where love is a transforming force in the process of becoming. By leading us on a quest for le merveilleux/lo maravilloso, they hope to enable us to fuse potentiality with actuality. However, in the surreal text, the jump from our own referential data of individual experience to the realm of the marvellous is often rendered incomprehensible due to the surrealists' decision not to provide us with any readily recognizable associative or connotative material. Consequently, they only succeed in disorienting the reader without transmitting either a message or an experience. If, on the other hand, we are able to discover or if we are given another external point of reference which we can use to carry us into the realm of the marvellous, as is the case in Magical Realism, the concept of surreality can indeed by experienced and perhaps even understood. By subjecting Carpentier's novel Los Pasos perdidos to a brief examination, I hope to defend the contention that L'Immaculée Conception is a more logical text than an initial reading would suggest.

Alejo Carpentier's novel is partially autobiographical in nature and has as its external experiential source a trip which the author made into the interior of Venezuela in 1947. Therefore, it has the

definite advantage of beginning with a specific situation in time and space. The reader is asked only to make a transition and not a complete transformation. Los Pasos perdidos also has a surface plot and an initially logical sequence of events, so that on one level it can be summarized very simply--the hero is a frustrated and disillusioned musician who accepts a commission to find some rare musical instruments in the Venezuelan jungle. He leaves his wife, takes a mistress and falls madly in love with a third woman with whom he journeys through the wilds before being rescued, rather unwillingly, by a search plane. After a short period of maladjustment upon his return to contemporary society, he begins to reintegrate.

Fortunately, this is not the only level of experience contained within the novel. Studying it in a somewhat more detailed fashion, we see that Los Pasos perdidos is divided into six major chapters each of which is again subdivided into smaller sections in much the same manner as the surrealist text L'Immaculée Conception. The first chapter in Los Pasos perdidos is prefaced with a quotation from the Bible which reveals the alienated condition of contemporary man in the modern world and serves to accentuate further the difference between original time and mechanistic modern time, especially since the idea of creation plays an important role in the Bible. The first three chapters, or roughly half of the book, are primarily concerned with the protagonist's protracted attempt to free himself from the modern world where he finds that life has become nothing more than a series of empty symbols in a disintegrating society and where man is cut off from any value which could give meaning to his existence. It is throughout these chapters

that the protagonist begins to comprehend, albeit unconsciously, that man must be willing to regress in certain experiences in order to progress.

The actual story line begins on the first day of the protagonist's vacation, thus giving him a limited and temporary release from a strict clock-time existence. However, this extra degree of freedom also thrusts him into a position where he is forced to think about and to reflect upon the conditions of his life; this results in an increased feeling of alienation. With hours on his hands and nothing substantial to fill them, he goes to visit his wife (Ruth) who is acting in a play which has been running for five years. Upon seeing her, he is suddenly struck by the feeling of being transported back in time. The repetitive nature and the feeling of lack of accomplishment in their lives is again reinforced when he sees that even artistic self-expression has become imprisoned in a material present governed by a mechanical time that denies any hope of transcendence.

In an automatic, empty fashion, the protagonist returns home, but unable to concentrate and contemplating the purchase of a book, he wanders out onto the street. A sudden afternoon downpour forces him to seek shelter and he enters an opera house. However, as soon as the first notes of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony sound, he feels complete revulsion and leaves, searching for a bar where he hopes to escape into alcoholic oblivion. While looking for the bar, the protagonist literally runs into his old friend and mentor, the Curator (the surrealist chance encounter--the Curator provides the external impetus for his quest, thus being somewhat analogous in function to Nadja in Breton's

novel of the same name). The Curator tells him that he has an extraordinary gift for him and they return to the Curator's house together. This gift proves to be a tape of some primitive instrumental music that confirms the protagonist's theories on the origins of music. The Curator then questions him about the progress of his research and the protagonist is forced to confront yet another unfulfilled dream from his past. The protagonist's confession both to himself and to the Curator is important insofar as it shows the protagonist's conscious recognition of himself as a fragmented existence rather than as a developing entity. The Curator grants him a quasi-religious absolution and suggests that he undertake a journey to procure the instruments. He refuses and quickly leaves the house.

The protagonist then goes to the apartment of his mistress Mouche who is the embodiment of modern society's values and whose only bond with him is one of carnal pleasure. She is an astrologer and her very occupation shows one form of escape from external reality into a sort of pseudo-marvellous realm, into artificiality. While in her home, he and some friends view a movie for which he supervised the music. Despite the fact that the film is technically perfect, it is, he believes, only another inconsequential fragment in the vacuum of his life. After their friends leave, he tells Mouche about his discussion with the Curator. She immediately suggests a dishonest plan which would enable her to accompany him. At first he refuses, but after more consideration he agrees to the plan and the next morning he goes to the museum to accept the Curator's offer. Alone for a moment in one of the galleries, he remembers the days after the war when he frequented

museums, gazing at the artistic works on the walls and attempting to lose himself in a past when life may still have had some form of unity. He recalls his attempt to return to his own childhood and, by symbolic extrapolation, to the collective genesis of mankind.

Chapter Two deals primarily with the beginning of the protagonist's struggle to effect a separation between himself and the modern world. In this chapter he makes contact with the world of his childhood and thus ignites the spark that will later enable him to free himself from Mouche and from the artificial world which she represents. When the plane touches down in South America, he becomes aware of the powerful primal force of nature--a nature which, ensconced as he is in artificiality and deception, appears to be totally incomprehensible and unpredictable. The power of nature appears almost like a new, a different and a threatening world and he is overwhelmed by the variety of sense experiences and primary perceptions that it provokes.

The following morning a revolution erupts in the city where they are staying and disrupts the habitual pattern of existence. This disruption produces a crisis situation that reveals the artificiality of Mouche, of the other guests and, up to a certain extent, of the protagonist himself. The imminent danger of death brought forward by the revolution forces the people to confront their own lives. Unable to withstand this confrontation, their world disintegrates and they try to escape from the confrontation with life and death by engaging themselves frantically in their normal occupations or hobbies. They only succeed in showing how inconsequential their habits really are.

Chapter Three shows the protagonist's final stage of separation from the contemporary world. He commences his journey to the frontier of the realm of the marvellous where the object(s) of his quest are to be found--on one level the musical instruments and on the other the point where fusion between potentiality and actuality is possible. However, before he can cross the frontier, he must liberate himself from Mouche (the modern world) and replace her with a new integrated figure who represents the primal forces, timelessness and transcendence. This new symbolic figure is Rosario and she will accompany him on his quest. The journey itself is comprised of four major episodes, beginning with the Mountain, continuing to the Valley of Flames, going on to the Land of the Horse and ending in the Land of the Dog.

The Mountain carries the protagonist into the experiences of his own personal childhood and it is there that he meets Rosario--the primal archetype and the symbol of the woman through whom he will learn the joy of unity. In the Valley of the Flames, he finds the Orinoco which is the waterway into the marvellous realm where life is no longer governed solely by the passage of time. In the Valley he meets Yannes, the seeker of material wealth, and through him sees the dangers and the limitations of greed and avarice.

As he travels further back in time and space he enters the Land of the Horse. Here he begins to feel a closer link to the primal animating force of nature and he succeeds in understanding the idea of a timeless reality. Also, in this land, he begins to understand the struggle between chaos and order through his association with Fray Pedro, the missionary, for it is eventually revealed that Fray Pedro

conquers death through the transcendent power of his faith. At last he reaches the last stage of this part of his quest, the Land of the Dog, where Puerto de Anunciación is located. This is the departure point for the unknown world that lies ahead waiting to be discovered. Here, in this small village, he finds the inn called Los Recuerdos del Porvenir--a name which suggests the mysterious and, to the modern mentality, the incomprehensible. It is also here that the protagonist finally wins his freedom from Mouche, both in the physical and the spiritual sense.

In Chapter Four of Los Pasos perdidos, the protagonist enters the jungle and this entrance symbolizes the death of the exterior world. The jungle is a chaotic test through which the "hero" must pass in order to experience time before the creation of man. He identifies his party with the original conquistadores, but it is important to note that he takes the role of a musician--his own profession and the one with which he must reconcile himself eventually. While journeying through the jungle, the protagonist must confront his fear of death, of night and of the unknown. In a primitive Indian village surrounded by primal realities, the protagonist locates the musical instruments and the location of these instruments gives him a sense of potentiality--a sense lost to him for many years. In locating the instruments he has finally accomplished something which he feels is significant. Later, in the same village, Fray Pedro holds a mass to give thanks for their salvation from the storm of the last evening. As the service continues, the protagonist feels as though he is caught in a regression of time which carries him back to the paleolithic era, represented by the culture of

the village. After they leave the village, they continue travelling always regressing further back in time. The successive stages are marked by the increasingly archaic cultures they encounter en route. At one point in the journey, the protagonist listens to a dialogue between a witch doctor and a corpse whom the doctor is trying to rescue from the land of the dead. This the protagonist recognizes as man's primordial attempt to conquer death and in the chant he finds the primal function of music--to retrieve life from death. (There is, I believe, a mythological reference here to Orpheus.) After having passed through the trials of the jungle, they emerge by waters. They have reached the end of their journey; they have reached the beginning of time or the third day of Genesis.

In Chapter Five, the protagonist learns of the Primal Laws which govern life and the universe. In Genesis, man is still capable of creation and it is here that the protagonist's creative faculties are rejuvenated. However, he is unable to use his talent, for he is out of his own time, and while he can temporarily experience transcendent time, his own evolution and that of the world precludes any possibility of permanent entrance into timelessness or pure potentiality. This fact is made evident in the episode involving the violation of a young girl by the leper Nicasio. The protagonist is supposed to revenge this violation, but he is unable to shoot the man because he has an individual moral consciousness rather than a purely collective, instinctive one which would not only permit, but actually demand an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth reaction. In addition, in this chapter, his love for Rosario becomes possessive and thus loses its

transformative value, making it analogous to Yannes' desire to possess material wealth, a desire which has no place in a land of primal realities. The protagonist must return to the contemporary world. This return is accomplished when he is "rescued" by a search plane and taken back to his own time.

Chapter Six concerns itself with the protagonist's return to the modern world and with his vain attempt to return to Rosario. He must now learn to reconcile himself with his own life and time, allowing his recent experiences to develop his perception of the dimensions of existence. He realizes that as an artist he stands between Genesis and the Apocalypse and that his task is one of conciliation. He must attempt to communicate the incomprehensible and to create within time experiential manifestations of the timeless. The act of artistic creation gives form to the chaos that existed prior to creation and he realizes that the form is the key to creation. It is the mediating term between the rigidity of conscious formulation and the chaos of the unfathomable consciousness. It is the ordering of elements so that they have both internal and external significance relating to both the ego and the self. In his failure to return to Genesis, the protagonist learns of the impossibility of recapturing the marvellous through a conscious mind-controlled effort, for it is a reality that transcends the limitations of the ego and therefore cannot be manipulated. It can only be experienced as part of existence and cannot constitute an entire life.

The idea of the quest in Los Pasos perdidos is clearly delineated in the text itself. The literal and the metaphorical levels are

readily discernible, enabling the reader to follow the protagonist's progress with a minimum of effort. This is not the case in L'Immaculée Conception. First of all, the surreal text has no formal references to objective reality to which the reader can relate. The quest is conducted totally with the mind(s) of the authors so that the area explored can never be reduced to something as basic as a map. Secondly, throughout much of the text, there is zero point of view, and when a voice--usually the first person singular--does appear there is no firm indication that it is in any way a narrative one. How then can L'Immaculée Conception be said to be based upon the theme of the quest when the prime literary constituents are missing? Clearly, it cannot in the ordinary sense of the word. However, in order to understand the quest or any other theme in a literary work, the reader must first of all consider the time in which it was written, the author's purpose in writing it, and the general body of aesthetic criteria which pertains to the movement. Looking at the quest in the Greek epic necessitates acceptance of the fact that the Greeks believed in the ability of their gods to grant supernatural powers to mere mortals, while studying the quest in Dante's works requires the reader to suspend personal scepticism and accept that a living person can descend into the realm of the dead and return. The reading of Magical Realism on anything but a totally superficial level means acceptance of the idea of a quest where man not only travels in space, but also in time.

In order to appreciate any work the reader must be acquainted with the historical, social and aesthetic criteria which influences its development. Many literary movements have provided much of this

referential material within the texts themselves and thus have saved the reader hours of research, but literature displaying modernist tendencies omits most background material from the primary text and instead concentrates upon creating or exploring experience. Surrealism is the most extreme example of this tendency and in order to gain even a basic understanding of the Surrealists' texts, we must become students of their manifestos. The "plot-line" and the external references necessary for navigation into the surreal seas are given in their theoretical writings; their tenets and the keys to their techniques are provided in their manifestos. The surrealist manifestos replace the narrator and they make a protagonist unnecessary, for these writings should enable the reader--each reader--to be the protagonist and to understand the object of the quest without receiving helpful hints from a narrative voice. However, the action and the place of the action, like the concept of time, are not sufficiently explained in theory to permit the reader to understand the quest in surreal works. The attempt to fo-low structurally the quest in L'Immaculée Conception and to discern what the Surrealists are doing in this text is greatly facilitated by a comparative study with a text that does offer the reader external referential data and that has a refreshingly informative narrative stance. Alejo Carpentier's Los Pasos perdidos is engaged in the same basic quest and I will be referring back to it in an attempt to explicate what I believe could be its own literary genesis, L'Immaculée Conception.

André Breton and Paul Eluard, sometimes referred to as the mind and the heart of Surrealism, collaborated on this textual attempt to

find that point where things cease to be understood as contradictions--where potentiality can be reconciled with actuality. In order to do so, they attempt, through the process of directed automatic writing, to escape temporarily from the apocalyptic contemporary world into the world of Genesis where creation is possible and where exploration is not bound by social restriction or limitation.

The quest in L'Immaculée Conception, therefore, properly begins at the moment of creation, at conception. The Surrealists withdraw consciously from the external world and begin to explore their unconscious/subconscious using free association of images and of ideas in their attempt to attain greater freedom through greater experiential knowledge. They are trying to begin again and to correct the limited, shallow state of their own existence by reliving their lives through active exploration rather than through passive acceptance. By going back to the beginning they are trying to recover values which will transcend the role-playing which society has assigned to them. Some of their exploratory writing (e.g.: "L'Homme") is rather like a catharsis, for by indulging in it they can see what has happened to their own lives and to the lives of others in the modern world.

At the instant of "Conception," existence is free, without the imposition of others' consciousness or of self-consciousness. The strict use of the impersonal third person suggests absolute uncontaminated purity where essence has not yet been corrupted or restricted by contact with the outside world of time-oriented values. However, as soon as the actual instant of conception has passed, complete purity disappears into a threatening undercurrent and a second person

consciousness is introduced by the cryptic comment: "Tu n'en sais heureusement rien et c'est à peine si tu regardes du côté de l'image muraille qui montre Mazeppa seul, éperdu dans la steppe."[20] The consciousness (or the universal protagonist as it might be termed) must then face the beginning of fear as an anonymous warning is given: "Il y a ici des murs que tu ne franchiras pas, des murs que je couvrirai d'injures et de menaces, des murs qui sont à jamais couleur de sang vieilli, de sang versé" (p. 10). The primary consciousness is being threatened and challenged by an unknown antagonist when his journey through and for life has scarcely begun. In Carpentier's Los Pasos perdidos, the protagonist also has an anonymous oppression hanging over him near the beginning of the novel. The oppression is that of the lack of meaning in his own existence. Alienation and time are his antagonists, hope is his own personal protagonist, and his initial conscious acknowledgement of them is the unconscious beginning of his quest.

In L'Immaculée Conception, first person singular consciousness is introduced for the first time in "La Vie intra-utérine." This consciousness is, oddly enough, is introduced within an image which suggests fear and a predatory nature: "leurs yeux [qui] sont moins loin de moi que le vautour de sa proie" (p. 12). The "I," "You" dichotomy which appears in the protagonist's relationships with Ruth and Mouche in Los Pasos perdidos as he develops, also appears here in the less identifiable surreal form as an inhibiting factor between potential and actual fusion, since strain/alienation exists between the prey (primary consciousness, and by extrapolation society) and the predator.

The shocking impact of the internal with the external consciousness follows in "La Naissance." This text is rather bitter in tone and also strangely detached, for the consciousness suggested by the first person disappears. The general feeling evoked by the images is one of alienation and, perhaps, of loss. Potentiality has been stunned by its encounter with solid untransformable and untransforming actuality. We see this happening more clearly in Los Pasos perdidos when the protagonist is forced to confront the fact that many of the dreams from his past have not been realized and that despite his original promise, his work is now merely a financial enterprise which is unrewarding in other respects. At this point in Los Pasos Perdidos, the quest actually begins to become a conscious one. Only after his chance encounter with the Curator is the musician given the opportunity to begin his quest. The first of several complementary paradoxes occurs here, for "La Naissance" into the external world, is on one level--that of potentiality--death. Likewise, in Carpentier's novel, upon reflection, the reader sees that the protagonist's creative and potential death began at the moment of his birth into a stagnant society and was intensified when he accepted its values.

"La Naissance" in Breton's and Eluard's work flows naturally into the longer passage, "La Vie," which is, perhaps, the most depressing, the most complicated and the most difficult to understand of the five sections in "L'Homme." It is a mass of contradictory and often empty images, but then remembering that the Surrealists, particularly Breton, believed contemporary life to be empty and meaningless, the text can be understood as reflecting their attitude towards what they

found in society. Contemporary life is the prison, the fortress, the dungeon, from which modern literary "heroes" wish to escape, and the dragons that they slay are the psychologically indoctrinating ties which bind them to a fragmented existence. The last image in "La Vie" is a poignant statement of the social entrapment against which the Surrealists and later the Magical Realists struggled, for the phrase "les menottes du sourire" (p. 19) suggests the socially acceptable facade behind which many people are forced to conceal their primary actions and their true feelings. The protagonist's life, like the life in L'Immaculée Conception, is an empty shell held together by habits and fears.

The last section in "L'Homme," "La Mort," marks the final stage in this level of the surrealist quest. Only in death, or in the confrontation with death does the primary consciousness re-appear, accompanied by a suggestion of greater understanding. Unfortunately this understanding does not bring a release from the emptiness of actuality alone, but simply the knowledge of the futility of such a limited existence. The belief in something greater, somewhere in the universe--the belief in le merveilleux--which will rescue man from this futility, is what gives the artist the strength to journey into unknown lands, to search for the marvellous whether it is in the unconscious spirit of man or in the hidden beauty of Latin American lands.

Surrealists and Magical Realists seek to explore a new dimension of reality which will help to unify life. The life of the protagonist in Los Pasos perdidos throughout the first three chapters corresponds roughly to "L'Homme" in L'Immaculée Conception, for in both these sections the major problem proves to be the excessive attention paid to

authenticity and artificiality. Through honest self-exploration and through willingness to remove consciousness from the external orientation of the contemporary world--through metaphorical death--man can reach the threshold of the marvellous realm where he may experience the power of primal, timeless reality(ies).

In Los Pasos perdidos, the protagonist only experiences Genesis once, after he has successfully passed through the trials in the jungle. His quest takes him from the Apocalypse (modern world) to Genesis (Venezuela's Land of the Dog), and then back to the Apocalypse. This makes his journey immeasurably easier to follow than the one contained within the surrealist text. In L'Immaculée Conception Genesis is experienced at least twice. The first instance is contained within "L'Homme" in the section "La Conception," where the primary consciousness is being conceived. A second Genesis can also be found in "La Mort," where the consciousness begins to recognize the repurification process which accompanies a confrontation with death. The recurrence of Genesis offers a reflection of the cyclical nature of human existence, but it also shows that there is always hope for a new, fuller life.

The section entitled "Les Possessions" can be equated with the trials which the protagonist endured in the jungle where he consciously had to confront and conquer his own fears. He willingly and consciously entered the jungle in the search for the musical instruments (symbolic of the marvellous); the Surrealists, willingly and consciously, began explorations of this area of their being for two reasons. The first was their desire to prove that the poetic state, if properly

cultivated, can simulate madness and that as a result there is no strict line between sanity and insanity. To say there is erects a false dichotomy. Insanity is pure potentiality without any actuality control. It is chaos. Sanity is pure actuality without potentiality. It is the modern world. The second reason was to show that insufficient control within a person's own mind is capable of producing as forbidding a prison as society's overly restrictive controls. It also is a dragon which must be slain. Everything has its own order, governed by control or by lack of control, but only the fusion of the two can result in transcendence. While the surreal and the magically real texts may devote most of their exploration to potentiality in an attempt to compensate for the years of neglect it suffered, the artistic works substantiate the contention that neither of these forces can be allowed to predominate to the detriment of the other.

If--to use anti-surrealist terms--"L'Homme" is taken to be a symbol representing Everyman, the chapter "Les Possessions" can be understood to be one of the dangers that man faces in "La Vie," for life in contemporary society is so restrictive that people may decide to take permanent escape from limits and artificiality as the object of their quest (this decision may well be an unconscious one), and thus they run the risk of finding themselves in another type of imprisonment. They attempt to take themselves out of their time, and instead of finding the freedom offered by transcendent values and time, find themselves in a vacuum. If the protagonist in Los Pasos perdidos had been allowed to stay permanently in the land with Rosario, he would have suffered the same fate.

In Carpentier's novel the protagonist enters chaos (the jungle) in gradual steps and the text contains proof within itself that he survives to enter Genesis. On the other hand, in the surrealist text, the transitions are omitted. The consciousness enters and explores realms of chaos (insanity) in order of increasing severity, but there is no textual evidence to show that it successfully re-emerges--at least not as explicit evidence as Carpentier gives. The evidence is found only in the fact that the text continues. Specifically it continues with "Les Médiations." The consciousness must have survived in order to be concerned with the idea of mediation. Perhaps, having lived through both excessive control ("L'Homme"), and no control ("Les Possessions"), it is now better able to mediate between the unfathomable consciousness and the rigidity of conscious formulation that the protagonist in Los Pasos perdidos found and which, after his experiences, he was better able to comprehend.

Rigid control in existence is something most people are familiar with and thus it does not require much external explication, but perhaps L'Immaculée Conception would be more comprehensible if a few words were devoted to a more complete analysis of "Les Possessions," especially with regard to the eventual resolution of the quest. Each of the five mental illnesses in this section can be understood as a step in the consciousness's journey to Genesis and the experiences it has within this realm. As the Surrealists travel further into the poetic/irrational area of experience they become increasingly detached from the external world which restrictively governed their cycle of existence in "L'Homme."

In "Les Possessions," they become more aware of the struggle between primal forces, until finally in "La Démence précoce," they reach the extreme limit and pass into the marvellous realm where transcendence is possible and where time has no meaning. They experience the chaos of existence before the imposition of form. The protagonist in Los Pasos perdidos makes the same journey in a more explicit fashion, for he travels through the jungle slowly, entering primal reality before passing into Genesis at the dawn of creation. In both the surreal and the magically real rext, this section is governed by its own order--that of chance, total emotion and primal reality. The exploration of this dimension aids those engaged in this quest to find that point where contradictions are reconcilable, for it is in this realm that transcendental values can be experienced since the limitations imposed by time have been removed, or rather have not yet been created. In the surreal text, "Les Possessions" is also textual proof of one of their theories, for by simulating insanity they prove that sanity and insanity are not irreconcilable contradictions. They are merely different ways of experiencing and relating to past and present external stimuli. The difference between the poet and the madman is one of degree of socially acceptable integration between potentiality and actuality. It is not a difference of right and wrong, since in another society behaviour which we call mad might be considered perfectly sane and vice versa.

In both Los Pasos perdidos and L'Immaculée Conception, the protagonist/consciousness is forced to leave Genesis, for the intellect which orders does not belong in chaos. This intellect prohibits man

from entering Genesis permanently, but emotion or instinct alienates the consciousness from the contemporary world. Therefore, in order to continue--in order to transcend the limited cycle of existence--the quest for the fusion between potentiality and actuality must continue. However, before this can be accomplished there must be mediation between total control and utter chaos in life and in art. Those who have experienced the marvellous, even temporarily, must now attempt to reveal it to their contemporaries in the Apocalypse and even more importantly, they must constantly engage in further exploration themselves, for this is part of the process of becoming. The primal truths which exist in Genesis and give it strength must be reconciled with the order in the Apocalypse.

The section entitled "Les Médiations" in L'Immaculée Conception corresponds roughly to Chapter Six in Los Pasos perdidos since it is in these sections that the fusion of past experiences--order and chaos--is mediated in order to permit new exploration and a new immaculate conception. In the magically real text, the reader is informed of the decision of the protagonist to do so in a relatively explicit manner. In the surreal work, the decision is found within the title, but no other links are provided. The chapter is compartmentalized into six sections, the first five of which build towards the sixth. "La Force de l'habitude," "La Surprise," "Il n'y a rien d'incompréhensible," "Le Sentiment de la nature," and "L'Amour" are all mediators in "L'Idée du devenir," and the process of becoming itself is a mediator in the quest for that point where things cease to be understood as contradictions. The quest involved in the process of becoming results in an infinite

series of new beginnings, of original judgements and of immaculate conceptions, for the process involves constant change and chance. Becoming is an active process which requires exploration of new dimensions; it ends stagnation. In Los Pasos perdidos, the protagonist, after his explorations into the realm of the marvellous, continues to engage in the process of becoming and in doing so mediates between the actuality of the past and present and the potentiality of the future. The mediations give him a new knowledge, the chance to make new original judgements, both of which hold the promise of a new life from an immaculate conception.

In the surreal text, the knowledge that the Surrealists have gained and from which the new immaculate conception may come is contained in the chapter entitled "Le Jugement originel." This chapter is both an end and a beginning, for the original judgement means the end of the past limited existences--both those which result from excessive external control ("L'Homme") and those which result from excessive internal control ("Les Possessions"). Having begun the continuous process of mediation and therefore of integration, the Surrealists are now capable of developing various immaculate, original concepts which may, in turn, be the beginning of a fuller, more integrated life.

Mediation between the various experiences in the individual texts led to a new--if not greater--understanding of a seldom explored dimension of reality. Perhaps, in the same way, mediation between the French and Spanish texts may have led to their mutual illumination. Carpentier's novel may have become more meaningful to the reader when

examined in relation to its possible literary "parent": L'Immaculée Conception, for Los Pasos perdidos itself may be understood as a magically real "immaculate conception" born from the union of the real with the surreal world. In its turn, the "childlike" simplicity of Los Pasos perdidos may have enabled us to take the first step in the exploration and criticism of the long ignored--perhaps even lost--text, L'Immaculée Conception. This comparative study may best be understood in the light of the line "The child is father to the man."

NOTES

[1] Cited by Enrique Anderson Imbert, "Literatura fantastica, realismo mágico y lo real maravilloso," in Otros Mundos, otros fuegos: Fantasía y realismo mágico en Iberoamérica, ed. Donale A. Yates (Ann Arbor: Latin American Studies Center of Michigan State University, 1975), p. 39. There appears to be a strong similarity between the objects which Roh speaks of and the surrealist objets trouvés which were introduced in the art of Marcel Duchamps. He took everyday objects and displayed them as works of art.

[2] Ibid., p. 39.

[3] Arturo Uslar Pietri, Letras y hombres de Venezuela (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1948), pp. 161-162.

[4] Alejo Carpentier, El Reino de este mundo (Buenos Aires: Librería del Colegio, 1975), pp. 51-57. Emphasis is my own.

[5] Angel Flores, "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction," Hispania, 38 (1955), 189.

[6] Ibid., p. 189.

[7] Ibid., p. 189. Emphasis my own.

[8] Luís Leal, "El Realismo mágico en la literatura hispanoamericana," Cuadernos Americanos, 26 (1967), 233.

[9] Ibid., pp. 231-233. Emphasis my own.

[10] Jean Franco, Spanish American Literature (New York: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1973), p. 234.

[11] Ibid., p. 234. Emphasis my own.

[12] Francis Claessens, "Introduction à la lecture d'Eluard," Cahiers d'Analyse Textuelle, 2 (1960), p. 21.

[13] Due to political problems, Carpentier's passport had been revoked and he borrowed Desnos' identification in order to board the ship; see Napoleon Neptali Sánchez,"El Surrealismo: Fermento transformador en la obra novelistica de Alejo Carpentier" (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1977), p. 78.

[14] Ibid., pp. 55, 79.

[15] Ibid., p. 80.

[16] Ibid., p. 94.

[17] Ibid., p. 83.

[18] André Breton, Manifestes du surréalisme (Paris: Gallimard: 1977), p. 76.

[19] Cited by Eugene Skinner, "Four Novels of Alejo Carpentier" (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms Inc., 1969), p. 4.

[20] André Breton and Paul Eluard, L'Immaculée Conception (Paris: Seghers, 1961), p. 10; all subsequent references in this chapter are to this edition.

CHAPTER II

SURREALISM AND MADNESS

Since ancient times, the artist in general and the writer in particular has frequently been assigned the multiple role of leader, guide, friend, mentor and father confessor. The writer has, in one way or another, throughout the centuries, helped society to face reality and to work out the problems confronting man in society. Aristotle himself acknowledged the therapeutic effect of tragedy's catharsis.[1] Long before psychiatry or psychology received formal recognition as distinctive professions, the writer was engaged in an unofficial attempt to help man to come to terms with himself and with others. Hundreds of years before psychoanalysis was popularized by the infamous Dr. Sigmund Freud and his "radical theories," artists were acting as amateur analysts. The success ratio of these informal sessions is a question best left to the numerous adepts of conjecture, but the fact that these meetings have such an extended history in literature pre-dating Freud should not be ignored, for it shows what a great influence literature has had upon the development of modern-day psychiatry--an influence that is all too often ignored as the masses are rushed to the psychoanalytic altar, forgetting that for centuries literary works have been doing informally what psychiatry is now doing formally.

Sophocles, Aristophanes, Aeschylus, Virgil and Dante were all precursors of psychiatry. The great French poet Arthur Rimbaud is a more modern example of a well-known writer whose literary theories presaged later psychoanalytic developments. Rimbaud believed in and tried to effect altered states of consciousness in his poetry. While he did not attempt to explore the unconscious directly, several of his works represent voyages to the brink of the unconscious. Thus one could, perhaps, suggest that his writings anticipate those of his contemporary Freud, by almost one-quarter of a century. This poet-seer's famous line "Je est un autre" summarizes better than volumes of criticism his attempts to create, through the medium of poetry, an objective reality which is true for all men. It also foreshadows a problem that was to become a central concern of both Freud and the Surrealists--the alienation of man in society.

Sometimes psychiatry even goes so far as to borrow techniques from literature without bothering to acknowledge the source. Apparently this was the case with what is popularly known as free association. In 1857, the little-known poet Garth Wilkinson published a collection of mystical poems written using what he called the method of "Impressionism." In his words, "A theme is chosen or written down. As soon as this is done the first impression upon the mind which succeeds the act of writing the title is the beginning of the evolution of that theme, no matter how strange or alien the work or phrase may seem... The first mental movement, the first word that comes, is the response to the mind's desire for the unfolding of the subject."[2] His technique clearly bears an uncanny resemblance to both Freud's theory of automatic

association and to the Surrealists' practice of automatic writing, for which they claim to be indebted to Freud. Paradoxically, the anti-literature Surrealists drew on Freud who himself had drawn on literature--whether he always chose to admit it or not. Frederick Beharriell, in his article "Freud's Debts to Literature," outlines several of the major connections between this voracious reader's favourite writers and the development of his own psychoanalytic theories.[3]

André Breton's own interest in psychoanalysis and madness can be traced back to his medical studies at the Sorbonne in Paris. This interest was further developed when, in 1915, he was mobilized and began working in neuropsychiatric centres. Arriving as a medical assistant at the hospital in Nantes, Breton came under the growing influence of Freudian theories which were then attracting interest. Breton deeply admired Freud, and many of the Surrealists' theories, especially those surrounding the importance of dreams and the value of automatic writing, were derived from the psychiatrist's writings. Not only did Freud and Breton correspond with one another, they also had personal contact and Breton records one visit he made to the home of the eminent psychiatrist in his work Les Pas perdus.[4]

Breton was also influenced by the French professor of psychiatric medicine, Dr. Pierre Janet, whose writings were more readily accessible to the French-speaking Surrealist. One of Janet's works was a book entitled L'Automatisme psychologique (first published in 1889 and reprinted in 1921),[5] in which he discussed the use of automatic writing as a type of therapy while bearing in mind the possible implications of

such therapy for the normal consciousness, implications which Freud had, for the most part, ignored. Drawing from the theories of Janet and Freud, in addition to his own experiences in dealing with "madness," Breton developed the idea that the exploration of involuntary thought, of an unconscious already freed from the constrictions of the society and the family, might hold the key to greater liberty from all restrictions. As a result of this idea, Breton and other Surrealists undertook an exploration of the unconscious dimension of mind. Breton and Eluard's investigations into "madness" culminated in the section "Les Possessions" of L'Immaculée Conception.

However, the relationship between psychiatry and literature, especially Surrealism, has also had its stormy side. Breton's ardent admiration for Freud did not prevent him from developing a strong antagonism towards the psychiatric profession in general and his tendency to attack it in long literary diatribes (e.g. Nadja), did little to ameliorate the situation. The psychiatrists in turn resented Breton's encroachment upon what they considered to be their own sacred ground. Perhaps partially in retaliation for this professional gate-crashing, psychiatrists frequently indulge in lengthy, usually derogatory, comparisons between dementias and surreal works. They may be somewhat justified in this action in the light of the percentage of writers who may have been legitimately called insane, two of the most famous examples being Antonin Artaud and the Marquis de Sade, the first a Surrealist and the second claimed as a precursor by them.

Much of the hostility between these two fields may stem from the fact that while both were concerned with "madness," their attitudes

towards mental illness and the unconscious dimension of mind were widely divergent.

Freud regarded the mental illnesses as symptoms of a "sick" individual in a "normal" society. His main endeavour was "to infer or to guess how the mental apparatus was constructed and what forces interplay and counteract in it."[6] He wanted to gain an understanding of his patients' mental aberrations so that he could "cure" them. The Surrealists, on the other hand, believed that society itself was "sick" and that the cure for its illness might well lie in that part of the mind where the "mad" take refuge from the "real" world. The Surrealists wanted to explore this dimension of mind, for they believed that the knowledge hidden there was an integral part of man and vital to their quest to find a more integrated reality than the one society offered. They wanted to experience this dimension for themselves; they did not want to examine either themselves or others with the diagnostic detachment characteristic of the psychiatric profession, for they felt that such detachment could only serve to reinforce the artificially created dichotomy between sanity and madness.

The clinical approach taken by psychiatrists tends to isolate certain elements/symptoms in the individual patient which make him appear different or mad. These elements are then analyzed and categorized out of the context or the situation in which they were experienced and the patient is diagnosed as mad.[7] This tendency in psychiatry, which Breton forcefully opposes, is reflected in the attitude of many people towards a great number of things, including literature. Kafka, for example, the subject of many critical attacks

from all quarters, has been called everything from a Surrealist to a madman and, presumably, if one were to isolate clinically only one or two elements from his works instead of studying them as a whole, an argument, however wobbly, might be made to support these ideas. The arbitrary selection of certain dominant characteristics for isolation and examination is symptomatic of a general malaise in modern society. This isolation often has serious repercussions when allowed to develop into alienation, since the state of madness itself can be defined in terms of alienation. The French word for madman, "aliéné," suggests the extent to which man's inability to reconcile his dreams with reality, his potentiality with his actuality, his inner with his outer life, in short his alienation from himself and from others can be the dominant factor in the aetiology of many mental illnesses.

The "madness" resulting from alienation is one of the outstanding characteristics of modern society and the exploration of it, whether through psychiatric or literary methods, has become a cult in the twentieth century, probably enjoying greater notoriety and certainly more extended publicity than the Beatles, the Beach Boys and Dr. Spock combined. How many thousands of articles and books have been written and still remain to be written on the basic subjects involved in psychoanalysis and all of their possible corollaries? Groups such as "Insane Liberation" spring up from time to time, interspersed amid the continual onslaught of group therapy and encounter sessions. All of these phenomena reflect man's urge to understand not only himself, but also his relationship with others. By extrapolation, they also reflect his fear of going mad, since his relationship with "others" in society

determines his sanity. In order to try to avoid madness and thus having to admit to being different, mankind, particularly in the western world, is undertaking a collective self-analysis. Fear is strengthening a dichotomy between madness and sanity--a dichotomy which according to some (e.g. the Surrealists) may not even exist. Traditional psychiatry sometimes appears to be trying to reinforce this dichotomy since, despite the fact that such a fissure may be non-existent, it remains an extremely profitable "ghost" for those who can offer cures for or even theories relating to it.

However, in the last few decades a new "radical" school of psychiatry has been developing, a school which also questions the existence of this dichotomy and which is producing its own hero--the anti-psychiatrist psychiatrist. One of the more recent cult figures to enter first the psychiatric and then the literary scene is the psychiatrist R.D. Laing--a man who seems intent upon revolutionizing the field and who, to a certain extent, appears to be more closely aligned with the French Surrealists in his attitude towards mental illness than to any of his professional colleagues.

Many of Laing's theories appear to be closely related to those of the Surrealist André Breton; so much so, in fact, that the possible but heretofore unconjectured links between these men seem to be far stronger than the much publicized bonds between Breton and Freud. Laing, like the Surrealists and unlike the majority of psychiatrists, believes that "madness" can and perhaps should be viewed as a positive experience. They believe that such an experience and the knowledge that comes from it may take them one step further in their battle

against alienation and their quest for the reintegration of potentiality with actuality. In addition to their theoretical affinities, Laing has written a text, The Bird of Paradise, which is in many ways analogous in aim to Breton and Eluard's work "Les Possessions" in L'Immaculée Conception.

Since R.D. Laing is more explicit in theory, less surreal in practice, and therefore less difficult to comprehend than Breton and Eluard are, this chapter will attempt to use Laing to further explore the Surrealist text "Les Possessions." In order to establish a base for the final comparison the chapter will begin with an examination of the similarities and differences in their theories, followed by an individual interpretative analysis of the literary works as they embark upon a journey into madness. Such a study will, perhaps, take us one step further in the quest to understand L'Immaculée Conception.

Ronald David Laing, psychiatrist and author of The Divided Self (1960), Self and Others (1961; revised 1969), Reason and Violence (1964; with D. Cooper), Sanity, Madness and the Family (1964; with A. Esterson), Interpersonal Perception (1966; with H. Phillipson and A.R. Lee), The Politics of Experience and the Bird of Paradise (1967), Knots (1970), and The Facts of Life (1976), was born in 1927 in Glasgow, Scotland. After graduating from the Glasgow Medical School in 1951, he served a compulsory term in the British Army from 1951 to 1953 and there gained his first work experience in psychiatry. Upon his return to Glasgow, he worked in psychiatric medicine and the case studies in his first book, The Divided Self, are drawn largely from this time. In 1957 he moved to London and joined the Tavistock Clinic where he continued

his work in psychotherapy and published, with relative frequency, books based on his own experiences in treating psychotic patients.

While in his first book, The Divided Self, Laing already admits that he finds it extremely difficult to detect signs and symptoms of illness in his patients because, to him, their behaviour seems meaningful, it is quite different from his later books in at least three important ways:

1. there is no mysticism in it and no suggestion of any reality other than the one defined by natural and social science;
2. the patients are not seen as having any relationship to a super-sensory world, since Laing, at this point, does not deal with madness as a super-reality;
3. the disturbed state of the patient is still seen by Laing as being very much like a syndrome.[8]

Nonetheless, this work does foreshadow the later Laing in one very important respect, for in this book he begins to consider the progress of mental illness in goal related terms. It is, perhaps, the genesis of the work which most clearly delineated his theories regarding mental illness and the one with which this thesis is most concerned, The Politics of Experience and the Bird of Paradise. However, in order to avoid possible confusion later, it might be advantageous to take a brief glance at some of the terms Laing employs and the definitions he attributes to them before looking at his ideas in more depth and examining their possible relationship to Surrealism.

In his study of the family, Laing emphasized the difference between praxis and process. Praxis is an action which can be traced to a definite, conscious decision, made by definite people, for a definite purpose. Process, on the other hand, refers to events which appear to have occurred without being related to any conscious decision on the

part of any person. They just happen.[9] Experience as Laing defines it in The Politics of Experience is what used to be called the Soul. Experience is the invisible evidence of man's relationship to man. Behaviour is inter-experience; it is the study of the overt actions of two or more people who are both experiencing and being experienced.[10] These terms would appear to have literary counterparts in Surrealism. Process, in the simpler Langian sense, is analogous to le hasard, and praxis could find its complement in the directed element of automatic writing (e.g., the decision to simulate mental illnesses). The invisible experience which Laing speaks of may be the visible co-authored text of the Surrealists, since they record their initial experience of one another. Finally, behaviour could be interpreted as the reaction readers have to a literary text--specifically The Bird of Paradise and L'Immaculée Conception.

During the years from 1960 to 1964, Laing grew progressively further away from the popular attitude which regarded the patient as sick, as a victim needing a cure, but he still refrained from the glorification of madness as being related to the concept of super-sanity. After 1964, with the publication of Sanity, Madness and the Family, Laing began to expound upon the theory that mental illness should not be seen as a disability, but rather should be considered as part of a quest for the healing of the fissure that exists between the inner and the outer world. Both Laing and the Surrealists are searching for a point where this fissure no longer exists. Laing's search for the original Alpha and Omega of existence[11] echoes strongly the Surrealists' quest to find "un certain point de l'esprit d'où la vie et la mort, le

réel et l'imaginaire, le passé et le futur, le communicable et l'incommunicable, le haut et le bas cessent d'être perçus contradictoirement."[12] Another similarity in their lines of thought might be noted in Laing's reference to the realm of hypersanity which offers the possibility of a re-birth,[13] for this concept appears to be very close to the Surrealist realm of the marvellous.

Having now examined, to some extent, the obvious affinities between Laing and the Surrealists with regard to the theoretical framework of the exploration of the unconscious and madness, an interpretative analysis of the individual texts will now be presented in order to facilitate the final comparison. The Bird of Paradise, being a far simpler text, will be discussed first in the hope that it will act as a mediator and aid us in attaining a greater appreciation and understanding of the surreal text "Les Possessions."

From the very first paragraph of The Bird of Paradise, there is a suggestion of an ongoing struggle between the King with Crown and the I.[14] Their meetings always occur at night and this would seem to suggest that darkness or concealment is the habitat, natural or otherwise, of at least one of the combatants. On a figurative level, inherent within this image, is the idea of night before the dawn of a new day, or a new era. This struggle at night could be the attempt of the "I" to destroy the invisible barrier that prevented him from being able to emerge from the darkness and play an integral part in daily life. The conquering of the "King with Crown" suggests that the "I" has won at least temporary freedom and perhaps with this newly acquired liberty the journey may begin.

Who or what is this "King with Crown" which the unidentified "I" has killed in such a brutal fashion? The image "King with Crown" suggests the idea of righteous authority, of respectability and of power. It suggests, in short, the conscious element of mind/actuality which usually controls life and attempts to subjugate the unconscious element or potentiality. The "I" would, therefore, appear to be the individual under unconscious control. At the same time, this image carries strong religious implications--Jesus with his crown of thorns--and since organized religion is very often a power which seeks to control the individual's thoughts and behaviour, the image, in both of its associations is one of restriction and potential subjugation.

Ugliness and beauty are suggested in the imagery of the following section by the introduction of spider-crabs and birds. This juxtaposition of opposites would appear to reflect, in a rather obscure manner, two of the ways in which the unconscious, or potentiality, is generally viewed. One spider-crab--a single illusion or image coming from the unconscious--can be tolerated, but as soon as more spider-crabs appear, as soon as the unconscious becomes more powerful, madness may be detected and the unconscious must be destroyed. Only after its essence has been extinguished does the "I" realize how very beautiful and fragile such a force really is. However, the unconscious is blamed for its own destruction and it appears to feel that there was no need for something as beautiful as a bird to have appeared so ugly.

The idea of destruction is intensified in the passage about the dog (p. 141). It has been hopelessly mutilated by a car (one of the products of a mechanized society) and may be symbolic of the crippled

condition of mankind. The dog's broken back, its support, could be analogous to the split or break in man which is destroying him. The detached eye, lying alone, is an image of isolation and alienation. It also suggests the idea of sensory disintegration which, in turn, reflects the breakdown of communication between internal and external realities. The writer sees the similarity between his own condition and that of the dog, but he also questions the bonds between himself and the jeering crowds. He is, at once, both the subject of ridicule and the ridiculer. He is a fragmented being who still wonders if "Christ is forgiving him for crucifying Him" (p. 142). The mention of Christ could again refer to the idea of restrictive actuality and the crucifixion could refer to the subjugation of this actuality.

With the mention of Glasgow (p. 142), the universal "I" disappears and Laing, the individual consciousness, reappears. The imagery ceases to be in any way exploratory and the quest is halted by the intrusion of retrospection. At this point, The Bird of Paradise shows a distinct tendency towards the autobiographical, e.g., from the data gathered from the back flaps of various books, the reader knows that Laing spent much of his early life in Glasgow. By using a combination of logic and conjecture, the reader may, perhaps, speculate that in Glasgow Laing lost or began to lose contact with his unconscious, and thus it was there that "light began to fade from still laughing eyes" (p. 142).

This passage which begins with "Glasgow" and ends with "parquet linoleum," reads more like very poor impressionism than the recording of the unconscious perceptions of an inner life. Many of the images in this section reflect Laing's own perception of the phoniness, the

emptiness and the general greyness of life as people struggle to attain the dubious distinction of respectability. They are very specific and therefore limited in their associative value, e.g., "the three piece uncut moquette" (p. 142). While they may be meaningful to Laing and to those who know him, they do not reflect a step in the exploration of the unconscious and most certainly not in the experience of madness. These images merely reflect a consciously recalled memory. The sentences: "The tile close with banister and the stained glass window. The respectability. O the respectability" (p. 142), reflect the same inclination towards the autobiographical imagery. The stained glass window appearing in such close association with respectability may well be intended as a rather sardonic comment on what religion has become, but this interpretation is based upon the knowledge that Laing was brought up as a strict Scottish Presbyterian before becoming an atheist in college. The images here are reflections of his conscious perceptions and not of his "inner life." However, they may also be understood as a statement of the personal anguish that Laing feels and which results, in part, from the never-ending pressure to conform.

In the passage beginning "Mrs. Campbell" (p. 142), Laing presents a graphic case history of a young woman who is dying from an illness that no one can diagnose and who, by virtue of that fact alone, is of interest to the medical students. She ceases to be seen as an individual and becomes instead a disease, a "case" to be studied. This section of The Bird of Paradise reveals elements of dishonesty, hypocrisy and callousness in people, specifically people in the medical profession. In addition, it exposes the emptiness which Laing believes

exists in clinical, actuality dominated relationships and situations. Again, the passage discloses more about the conscious mind of Laing than it discloses about the collective or even the individual unconscious.

With the words "Bookshop, Glasgow. Usual copy of Horizon. The last number!" (p. 144), the reader is again taken onto the streets of Glasgow and further away from the quest to explore the unconscious. However, we are forced to remain there only a very short time before Laing appears once again to enter the unconscious realm--to enter, ever so slightly, the experience of madness. The word "Horizon," despite the fact that it is, in actuality, a magazine title, carries associative values of future, distance, quest, and a journey into the unknown. The last number of the paper Horizon could well be interpreted as an image of foreboding, since it suggests an end to the journey and an end to hope. In a certain sense, it also suggests the idea of the Last Judgement, especially since the next line informs the reader that "It is closing time now in the Gardens of the West" (p. 144). Perhaps actuality will write the future off, but potentiality still battles for existence. Following this suggestion, however remote, of a transcendental experience, comes a joke which further exposes the crassness of the outer world and provides an impressive contrast to the preceding image. Nonetheless, this joke marks the recurring intrusion of Laing the conscious individual into a text that is supposedly an exploration, or at least a recording of the unconscious.

The next passage goes from cold detachment of the image "Fifty cadavers laid out on slabs" (p. 144), to destruction and violence of

"--pieces of skin, muscle, penises, bits of liver, lung, heart, tongue, etc. etc., were all flying about" (p. 145). The image of dismembered bodies exemplifies the idea of a fragmented existence, bringing forth the problem of the fissure between potentiality and actuality once again. The final question, "how do you expect them to sort themselves out on the Day of Judgment?" (p. 145), suggests then if integration is not achieved, man will never have any hope of transcendence. The section as a whole could be understood as a reflection of Laing's own disgust with the medical profession which came about as a result of his conscious experiences with his colleagues.

The next "essay" is another memory-like horror story built around a case history of fear and pain. It contains the bitter comment that the individual should "not despair, the soul dies even before the body" (p. 145). One interpretation could be that potentiality dies before actuality, which is, in fact, symbolic of modern man's condition. The idea of potentiality (madness or escape from external control) dying before actuality is more acceptable than its reverse in society. Even religions which offer man eternity or "transcendence" are strictly controlled by a governing hierarchy and certain requirements in behaviour and thought must be met by members of the religious group during their time on earth, or they will be condemned.

The idea of potentiality death being more socially acceptable than actual physical death is emphasized in the juxtaposition of the passage just mentioned with the one about the "madman" Jimmy McKenzie. This man was considered a "bloody pest" (p. 146), because he went around the hospital shouting. In order to make the situation more tolerable, he

was given a leucotomy (a drastic measure in psychosurgery, better known as a pre-frontal lobotomy). Compassion may be felt for those faced with actuality death, but the same people who are so compassionate in situations involving the death of the body do not hesitate to murder man's unconscious. Potentiality, with its disturbing implications, is always in danger of being murdered through socially acceptable methods. While these thoughts may belong to Laing and a few other people, they do not reflect any growing exploration or knowledge of the unconscious. They simply take issue with the treatment of mental illness as it now stands.

The section on childbirth (p. 146), is, I believe, partially intended to provoke a crisis of consciousness within the reader. Through the grotesque images, Laing forces the reader to face the horror and revulsion, not so much at the image of the "anencephalic monster" (p. 146) itself, but rather at the fact that anything would be described in these terms. On a different level, these images provide a somewhat metaphorical statement of the condition to which man would be reduced if all potentiality were to be removed. Actuality life without any potentiality is, in Laing's eyes as in many other peoples', extremely ugly. At the same time, these images also provide a pictorial statement of the general attitude of many towards the idea of insanity and therefore towards the idea of the unconscious. By avoiding exploration of the unconscious because of this attitude, man limits his knowledge of both himself and others. He intensifies the problem of alienation and ends up enduring a life which is equally as frightening and as ugly as he imagines madness to be. In Laing's own words, "If this I that is the the wherewith and whereby is nothing that I know, then it is no

thing--nothing" (p. 147). He is suggesting, perhaps, that if one does not know the unconscious which is part of him, then he is nothing. His journey into the unconscious is to help him to know "this I."

The next section concerns itself with images of pain and destruction. The first image of a head without legs singing merrily in the street could relate back to the image of the dog with a broken back (pp. 147, 141). The back (spinal column) joins the head and--by extrapolation--the mind with the legs which provide the means for actuality movement, i.e. walking. It is required if the human being is to function as a complete, self-sufficient unit, for a large part of its function is, on a physiological level, to carry messages from the various parts of the body. It is an integrative structure. When it is severed the integrative process is stopped. In an analogous way, when potentiality (the unconscious) is separated from actuality (the conscious or critical lucidity), the process of becoming is stopped. The head or foetus in this passage could well be the potentiality of man, and the "stupid old woman" (p. 147) could be society's attempts to destroy this potentiality. In line with Laing's tendency towards the autobiographical, the specific element of society engaged consciously in this attempt could be the psychiatric profession. The struggle for survival between actuality and potentiality is further strengthened by the image of "Two men sit[ting] facing each other and both of them are me. Quietly, meticulously, systematically, they are blowing out each other's brains, with pistols" (p. 147). The idea of internal destruction is further emphasized in the following passage by the mention of "viscera and abortions" (p. 147). However, the fact that the dog (again referring

back to previous images) could not be killed even though it had been aborted testifies to the strength of the unconscious and its will to survive.

The struggle away from actuality, into potentiality and the ensuing battles between the two continue to be emphasized in the following images until the line "The lotus opens" (p. 149), where man reaches, or rather returns to a Laingian Genesis. Here existence can be experienced without the confines of space and time; here opposites cease to be understood as contradictions as he goes "Out and in beyond life and death now, beyond inner and outer, sense and non-sense, meaning and futility, male and female, being and non-being, light and darkness, void and plenum. Beyond all duality, or non-duality, beyond and beyond. Disincarnation" (p. 149). He experiences the ecstasy of "Cosmic froth and bubbles of perpetual movement of Creation Redemption Resurrection Judgement Last and First and Ultimate Beginning and End are One Mandala of Atom Flower of Christ. The eye of the needle is here and now. Two heartbeats enlace infinity" (p. 149). At this point everything integrates--even the different experiences offered by the different religions are united as one.

However this existence is not maintained and the struggle of the return journey between "Death and rebirth, enervation and regeneration" (p. 149) begins. Actuality slowly starts to regain control and all that the writer has left of this experience are "fragmented scraps of memory" (p. 150). The battle to become, to integrate <u>permanently</u> the potential with the actual, the inner with the outer is continuing, and fragmentation is still a very real problem. In an attempt to resolve this problem,

the writer wishes to go back to his past experience rather than to go forward--a wish which, were it fulfilled, would bring a halt to the quest. Evidence of his strong desire to return again to Genesis and to remain there is found in the passage beginning "Gropings, orientations, crumbs, fragments, bits of the jigsaw, a few demented ravings that may help the reconstruction of the lost message. I am just beginning to regain my memory, just beginning to realize that I am lost... Faint recall of a raving nostalgia, for the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory, Paradise Lost..." (pp. 150-151). He eulogizes his past experience with almost religious fervour.

The "Biblical" imagery in these phrases is picked up once again in the image of fishes (p. 151). The suggestion of resurrection from the waters of death--the idea of immortality--earlier symbolized by the lotus, now appears to be virtually negated by the image of fish washed ashore in their "death throes" (p. 151), especially since the usual symbol of the fish in Christian imagery implies a faithful swim through the waters of life searching for grace/immortality. The paragraph which follows seems to suggest that the Captain (Everyman in the sense that every man is the captain of his own life) can be rescued from the stagnant waters of life in which he is drowning by a bird-like "I," perhaps the unconscious dimension of mind. (The subjects in both paragraphs--the fish and the Captain--are dying because they are unable to integrate their physical properties with the element in which they find themselves. This reflects man's own inability to integrate his conscious with his unconscious.) Unfortunately, the Captain is washed ashore too soon and although he may be saved from actuality death, his potentiality death

is almost guaranteed. The mention of the doctor who "rips him apart like a doll" (p. 151) may be Laing's own thrust at the psychiatric profession, since many psychiatrists rip their patients' minds apart.

The next few paragraphs in The Bird of Paradise are dedicated to mocking some of the more ridiculous aspects of modern western culture as exemplified by a lamp in the shape of a Buddha. The Buddha is often a symbol for love and the way in which it is treated in this section reflects the corruption of love in contemporary society. Here, as in the passages which follow, Laing is ridiculing our actuality oriented society, but he is also indulging in a rather philosophic soliloquy, almost as if he is trying to come to terms with his own life instead of endeavouring to explore madness as part of a greater quest. In his frustration, he says that "This writing is not exempt. It remains like all writing an absurd and revolting effort to make an impression on a world that will remain as unmoved as it is avid" (p. 152).

The unconscious dimension of mind appears to be speaking in the lines "I want you to taste and smell me, want to be palpable, to get under your skin, to be an itch in your brain and in your guts that you can't scratch out and that you can't allay, that will corrupt and destroy you and drive you mad. Who can write entirely with unadulterated compassion? All prose, all poetry, to the extent that it is not compassion is failure." However, the conscious dimension rules in the succeeding paragraph and warns the unconscious that it must again return to its position of subservience very soon, for the "fire and the flood" (p. 154) are upon them. Both flood and fire are destructive elements, but their other associative values are equally as strong. Fire is

a creative and a purifying, symbolic element, possibly relating to potentiality (the unconscious); flood is symbolic of punishment, and since it is water also relates back to the image of the stagnant waters of life. The image appears to suggest that the consciousness knows that the struggle between itself and the unconscious will start again. Not much further on in the text, a dance begins, perhaps suggesting, because dance is movement, a journey towards integration and a "lovely, lightful life diffusing an ever newer fiercer freshness" (p. 155).

The last imagery-oriented paragraph (p. 156) would appear to suggest a strengthening of this movement or journey towards integration. The garden often is associated with Eden and with immortality, and perhaps the writer believes that he is on the threshold of eternal life. The cat, usually a predatory creature bound to the ground, may be viewed as actuality. It is receiving commands from "somewhere" to catch the bird that is capable of flying into the sky and releasing itself from the earth's bondage. This bird could be the Bird of Paradise or madness. The subsequent confusion between the I, the cat, and the bird, may be understood as textual evidence that a very basic process of integration between potentiality and actuality is beginning to occur. The "I" has seen the Bird of Paradise, it has experienced madness and it is no longer afraid of journeying into the unconscious dimension of mind. In an echo of an earlier thought, the text concludes with an expression of the author's desire to have us undertake a journey into the unconscious: "If I could turn you on, if I could drive you out of your wretched mind, if I could tell you I would let you know."

Having briefly outlined one possible interpretation of the journey in Laing's work The Bird of Paradise, let us now turn to the subject of this chapter, Breton and Eluard's work "Les Possessions."

One of the outstanding characteristics of "Les Possessions" and a rarity in automatic writing is irony. The title itself reflects this characteristic, for its derivative associations imply both being in possession or command of something/someone and the converse, being possessed by something/someone. The suggestion of being possessed by something in the ecclesiastical sense implies possession by the devil(s)--an idea which dates back centuries from the time when "madmen" were believed to be under the control of evil spirits. This apparent contradiction is one of many which the Surrealists were attempting to resolve in the exploration of the unconscious.

Although I have absolutely no intention of indulging in a minutely detailed textual analysis which itself would take a minimum of eighty pages, I do wish to devote a few words to the general organization of "Les Possessions" and then proceed to a possible interpretation of some of the elements, themes and images in the chapters. The following associative analysis does not presume to be definitive, but is rather presented in order to provide a working point of departure for the comparison of The Bird of Paradise and L'Immaculée Conception.

"Les Possessions" travels from the least severe of the mental illnesses, "la débilité mentale," through successively more severe dementias until reaching "la démence précoce," which is one of the most severe types and certainly the most prevalent form of madness in the contemporary world. Each of these illnesses leads us further away from

the realm of actuality and deeper into the realm of potentiality (madness) to the point where for all intents and purposes, the writing is rendered incomprehensible on any objective, subjective or even associative level. At this point it can only be understood in a purely individual and alienated context and thus no longer has any communicative value, although it may still arouse and express emotion.

> La Débilité Mentale (Feeble mindedness): usually affects the young and may involve errors of the sense. It is the suppression of psychic activity which may render the brain irritable and easily exhausted. This state is generally curable.[15]

The sentence structure in this text is short and relatively clear, especially when compared with other sections in "Les Possessions." The word order still tends to adhere to grammatical rules. However, the juxtaposition of the sentences/images creates an effect which disorients the reader, since they do not follow one another in the expected logical fashion. The resulting gaps cannot always be filled in with normal synthetic logic. This contradiction between form and content can be understood as reflecting difficulties in integrating the different dimensions of reality between inner and outer worlds. To our more sophisticated ears--perhaps cynical would be a more accurate word--the comments coming from this "patient" sound rather ironic. One example can be found in the line: "Tous les hommes sont partisans de la Liberté, de l'Egalité, de la Fraternité et j'ajoute de la Solidarité mutuelle" (p. 30),[16] where the class harmony of "liberté," "égalité," and "fraternité," the bourgeois slogan, is joined by fragments of slogans antagonistic to the bourgeoisie: "partisans" and "solidarité mutuelle."

Much of the thought expressed in "La Débilité mentale" appears to be little more than a parrot-like repetition of popular, almost institutionalized ideas which the writer does not really understand, but which he accepts--perhaps because he is not intellectually capable of rejecting them. This acceptance is expressed in such phrases as "l'homme considéré," or in, for example, the discussion of education where the writer says that "Mon père a donné à ses cinq enfants la meilleure instruction et une bonne éducation. Ce n'est pas pour accepter un emploi sans rétribution dans une administration qui ne paye pas." Irony is readily visible here in the implied attitude of many people towards education which is that education is not a learning process, but merely a means to an end--in this case to make money. The fact that the feeble-minded person sees through the pretense and knows the real reason that people give their children an education is also rather ironical.

Another problem of society, at least in the eyes of some, is reflected in the thinly concealed suggestion of a rivalry between siblings, which grows into a rivalry or a competition between people. The constant desire to out-perform the other person is found in the writer's delusion-like plans for a submarine. His brother may be talented and intelligent enough to win prizes, but the writer can also create, and create something which, in all probability, his brother never dreamed of. A real life example of this problem may be found in the arms race between the super powers.

Finally, his inability or reluctance to think for himself, coupled with his admiration for all forms of power, however contradictory they may be, shows the writer to be authority dependent, in much the same

manner as many people in society. This need for and belief in the importance of externally imposed order, logic, discipline and authority leads, quite naturally, to belief in God, since God is the supreme disciplinarian. Again, inherent within the pages of this text, is a rather ironic attack by the Surrealists against the usual concept of God as a loving and forgiving spirit.

> La Manie Aiguë (Acute Mania/Ganser Syndrome): is an emotional disorder characterized by great psychomotor activity, excitement, a rapid passing of ideas, exaltation and unstable attention. A protracted insanity may develop from this mania.

One of the most notable distinguishing features of the language in this text is the preoccupation with sound--with assonance and consonance, e.g.: ". . . tu as une jambe coupée, ça fait deux jambes que j'enjambe au mois de janvier," or "Une porte de verdure ferme la ferme de part en part. Je recueille les paris. Le fermier a un chapeau que j'ai porté, c'est un cadeau de la fermière"--so that the work is ordered more by acoustics (including rhythmic considerations) than by simple logic or ideas. Many of the images are constructed around sound and because of this linguistic inclination appeal first of all to the auditory sense, rather than to any reasoning process. The more automatic writing is, the stronger the unconscious control becomes, and the more emphasis there is on pure sound values.[17] The combination of deceptive, rational and instinctive elements that characterizes Acute Mania is shown clearly in the body of the text, for a sizeable percentage of the images will begin quite rationally, only to terminate with a word or a phrase which corresponds rhythmically or acoustically with the beginning, but which does not manifest any "normal" cause--effect relationship.

In other words, the ending follows instinct rather than logic, e.g.: "La sorcellerie est une débauche qui débouche près de l'ouvroir, l'oeuvre de charité."

Another important feature of this text is the emphasis which is placed upon the first person singular pronoun. A remarkably large number of the sentences/phrases begin with "je" followed by a verb of possession or a verb which shows the "je" to be in the process of achieving possession of something, e.g.: avoir, posséder, recueillir, all suggest that the "je" is, at least partially, reliant upon things as a way of attaining self-identification. The first person pronoun also indicates a preoccupation with ego, e.g.: je porte, je couche, je dessine, j'aime, etc. The appearance of both of these problems was indicated, although in a much less severe form, in the preceding text by the desire to gain a stronger identity through the creation of the fantastic submarine. Like the "je" in the passage simulating feeble-mindedness, the "je" in this chapter is an inventor, but here the process of inventing has been continuing for so long that the je "[n'a] pas besoin de les mentionner sur l'inventaire de ses [mes] inventions."

Several of the themes which are to reappear as linking threads throughout the rest of the journey into and exploration of madness are intensified in this simulation. As the external discipline--enforced by actuality--decreases with the increasing severity of the mania, an internal force related, perhaps, to potentiality begins to grow--an inner discipline which will eventually become as restrictive as its outer counterpart.

The central struggle between potentiality and actuality is still seen especially through the images relating to the different positions of man and women, e.g.: "J'écris, je dessine, j'ai des gueules de loup, j'ai ma femme avec moi dans mon lit même quand je suis debout. Elle travaille pour moi à faire la vie" (p. 35). The wolf is frequently the symbol for evil and represents the baser instincts of man. Man, in turn, is often used as an analogy for self-consciousness. The woman, on the other hand, symbolizes the sub- or unconscious and is sometimes associated with a voluntary return to chaos--a primal or irrational state where life is conceived.

Following this line of interpretation, "la soubrette" who notices the "je" watching her undress could very well symbolize madness, specifically his own madness. Having been seen in such intimacy, "la soubrette" can no longer be kept silent or under control and cries out. With the sudden appearance of this strong manifestation of unconscious control or madness, "tout le monde arriva et se jeta sur (le) moi pour le (me) forcer à partir" (p. 37). Although the following idea is strictly conjecture, I would like to suggest that the break which occurs in the text after this sentence could correspond to the time which the "je" spent in a sanatorium or a similar institution. Perhaps the psychiatrists have helped to "cure" him--by returning potentiality to its position of subservience to actuality. As the "je" declares, "C'est moi qui ai dû amputer la femme [potentiality] du sexe de l'homme [actuality] sous prétexte de chirurgie esthétique" (pp. 37-38). The irony in the passage is readily apparent in the complete lack of interest or self-respect that the "je" has after the psychiatrists have finished "helping" him.

The theme of religion also re-appears in this chapter by the associative power of names (Marie, Saint-Thomas--St. Thomas is the patron saint of schools and these three children are sent to a boarding school), and by the image of a man (actuality) sharing a bed with a woman (potentiality) which suggests the possibility of the birth of a child (a new, perhaps integrated, personality or another fragmented being). The surrealist belief that Christianity alone cannot offer transcendent values or eternity is expressed in the image: "Tout le monde me fait compliment. Je leur ai fait faire leur première communion sur le zinc avec une gauffrette. Ceci est mon sang, je leur expliquais" (pp. 35-36). The implication in these lines is that the modern communion service given in many churches is no more related to eternal life than is the guzzling of red balloons and the eating of waffles in a bistro.

> La Paralysie Générale (General Paralysis/General Paresis) is marked by progressive dementia, muscular weakness and speech disturbances. In a large proportion of cases, there is a preliminary stage of irritability often followed by exaltation and delusions of grandeur.

The symptoms of exaltation and delusions of grandeur are very evidently manifested in this text. The repetitive nature of the unnecessarily long and complex sentences reinforce the idea of "exaltation" that characterizes the disease. The word "adorée" and several variations of it appear seven times in the first nine lines of "La Paralysie générale." This, in combination with the other effusive language, shows the need to exalt and perhaps even to deify someone/something. Indeed, god-like qualities are attributed to this young woman, "éternelle en riant," "je me mets à tes genoux" (p. 39). This tendency towards

deification gives the text the air of a panic-stricken prayer for salvation or perhaps rejuvenation. The presumed emptiness of his own existence makes him require the recognition of others as is seen in the line "Pense à moi . . . leur mépris" (p. 40). The desire to idolize and the need to be recognized by someone/something important, especially by people--who are themselves insecure--was, to the Surrealists, a very basic problem in society.

The theme of religion continues to be emphasized, not only through the direct reference to Christ but also by extrapolation and association through the numerous allusions to trees (the crucifixion), blood and the swaddling cloth. The woman virtually becomes the god of the "I" and he worships her with fanatic devotion.

The rose, although only mentioned once, is also a central image in the text, for it suggests love (in both the Freudian and the more general sense). Love is a joining and could be understood as implying an integration between the conscious and the unconscious personality, between actuality and potentiality (Jung), and eternity (Biblical). The "patient" is clearly searching, in his own way, for transcendence, and in this section, situated in the structural centre of "Les Possessions," he comes closer to achieving integration than in any of the other simulations. In this text, there is, through the mention of love, the suggestion, however remote, of mediation between the forces of potentiality and actuality.

The post-script attached to the end of "La Paralysie générale" displays the man moving further away from transcendence or the possibility of it, and further into the unconscious dimension. Delusions of

grandeur and a vague hint of irritability may be detected in his irrational, disjointed and unreasonable requests ("Peux-tu me faire une commission achète un tank je veux te voir venir comme les fées" [p. 42]).

> Le Délire d'Interprétation (Delirium of Interpretation) is a condition of extreme mental and usually motor excitement, marked by a rapid succession of often unconnected ideas. It is frequently accompanied by illusions and hallucinations. Also known as Delirious Interpretation, it is a technique used by psychiatrists in the treatment of various psychoses. (The syndrome and the technique have the same name.) This technique involves the analysis of the patient's speech and action in an attempt to discover the cause of his illness.

The majority of this simulation is oriented towards images of bridges and of birds. By association, bridges and rainbows may be understood as links between two worlds or two souls. They span the water (and the earth) and allow the individual to rise above the reality of these elements like a bird. As a symbol, the bird is shared by both the Holy Ghost and Satan, thus creating, in its very appearance, an element of irony. Freed from actual earthbound constrictions, the bird is still prey to forces which seek to conquer him so that his only hope lies in the reconciliation, at some point, of these powers. Further strengthening the religious connotations of the text is the association of the bird with a prophetic role--the bringer of messages from other worlds.

This simulation, like the collective group of simulations, appears to follow an order which reflects a certain type of progression. In addition to maintaining, rather indirectly, the themes found in earlier chapters, various types of bird and the associations connected with them reflect the different types of madness.

The first bird mentioned in the "Délire d'interprétation" is the parrot, a bird which is strongly associated with the idea of inane and meaningless chatter. The lack of higher level synthesis in the parrot's verbal utterances is somewhat reminiscent of the inability of the patient in "La Débilité mentale" to grasp the significance of certain abstract statements or ideas, e.g., his mixture of the proletarian with the bourgeois slogan. In addition, the idea of repetition without comprehension suggests the way in which many people approach modern religions. The prayers are no longer communication, but merely an exercise in memory work. Until recently, the Sacrament of the Sick was given in Latin, and people often did not really comprehend the ceremony of reconciliation. This association could refer back to the final sentence in "Débilité mentale" which reads "Enfin l'homme croit en Dieu et on a vu de fortes têtes demander l'extrême-onction, c'est déjà un bon point."

The second bird mentioned is also figuratively associated with Christianity, for the cock announces the break of day (light) in the same way that Christianity is supposed to bring light into the world. Ironically, it also has certain negative connotations, several of the best known of these being adultery, egotism and fighting, which are against the Ten Commandments. Moreover, Peter was to deny Christ three times before the cock crowed, which, depending upon the reader's personal bias, may be interpreted positively or negatively. An additional ambiguity is thus added.

Horus, the god with the head of a hawk, is introduced in the next passage. Like the hawk, Horus is associatively linked with power and

strength. Yet, at the same time, it also represents evil, as did the wolf in the second simulation. The godhood symbolized by Horus reflects the wish for godhood found in acute mania. The next bird to appear is the phoenix--the beautiful lone bird which consumed itself in fire and became a symbol for immortality. This bird, which is so strongly associated with immortality since it embodies both man (actuality) and woman (potentiality), appears rather strikingly in an image with worms which are also an image for Christians.[18] The appearance of such a contradiction within the textual imagery reflects again an earlier problem.

The eighth paragraph might possibly be considered as corresponding to the break earlier discussed in "La Manie aiguë," since in this paragraph something is being broken and forced to flee in a manner somewhat analogous to the destruction of potentiality in the second simulation.

The re-introduction of the bird imagery is signalled by green woodpeckers and cuckoos. The colour green is associated with jealousy and also with the idea of immortality and resurrection (probably stemming from the re-appearance of green in spring and its relation to the growth of plants, flowers, etc.). It is also often considered to be a feminine colour (Mother Earth). The juxtaposition of green with the woodpecker which is so strongly associated with trees (a type of bridge between heaven and earth), this image manifests strong ties to the basic themes in "La Paralysie générale."

The other bird image which would appear to relate back to this chapter is that of the cuckoo. The cuckoo's song is known to be

extremely monotonous and the repetitive nature of "La Paralysie générale" is also somewhat monotonous. The cuckoo might also be associated with the idea of the passage of time. Eternity or infinity is a great concern in the third simulation ("ma jeune femme éternelle en riant," "dans l'infini des alphabets" [pp. 40, 41]), as the "je" sought for transcendence. However, the journey has gone too far and has passed the point where transcendence may have been possible. The suggestion is that time in the unconscious dimension has now become as stale and as fragmented as time was in the conscious one.

The next image of great impact is contained in the sentence: "Ne comptez plus sur moi pour vous faire oublier que vos fantômes ont la tournure des paradisiers." The mention of the ghost or phantom in such close proximity to the Bird of Paradise is striking, especially since Laing used this bird to symbolize his own glorification of schizophrenia. A ghost is associated with death, with emptiness and also, in the Biblical sense, with regeneration through the Holy Ghost. The Bird of Paradise suggests the idea of eternal life and a return to Eden. Clearly, the associative values of these images may be justifiably construed as positive--at least for the most part. However, neither of these images is bound to the earth as is man. They are transitory and belong to different elements. Insanity does not offer the individual a permanent solution since it is not the fusion of two dimensions, but merely the rejection of one for another. The unconscious realizes this and warns the "patient" that it can no longer be relied upon as an effective medium of escape or forgetting.

The final paragraph contains the suggestion of potentiality and actuality and also of time indicated by the progression of verb tenses from the past to the present. A more direct indication of fusion is found in the mention of Leda, who was the Greek equivalent of the modern day Virgin Mary, and the swan. Leda is associated with the dawn of a new era and the swan is both a male and a female symbol--the implication may be that of a new "immaculate" conception from the fusion of these two dimensions of reality. I would like to offer the suggestion that this paragraph shows what might have been, if further rejection of actuality resulting in "La Démence précoce" had not occurred.

> La Démence précoce (Dementia Praecox or Schizophrenia): is characterized by an impairment to think either concretely or objectively. While the formal intelligence usually remains intact, the ability to use it in a realistic way suffers and the "patient" enters a world of his own.

This passage is characterized by extremely long, often disconnected sentences, which, towards the end, become totally incomprehensible. As another general comment, the text does, in an overview, read like the final confession of a dying man. (Perhaps, it is the surrealist simulation of the Last Rites as thought to be experienced by a schizophrenic, expecially since, like "La Mort," "La Démence précoce" is the last text of a section.) Religious imagery--particularly that which relates to ghosts and spirits--predominates from the very first sentence where an almond is mentioned (symbolic of the Trinity)[19] to the last "paragraph" which appears to be somewhat akin to the idea of talking in tongues. The phenomenon of talking in tongues is associated with the descent of the Holy Ghost and is one of the ways to attain a state of ecstasy. The same problem which was presented in "La Débilité mentale" appears in

this text, for man is still being controlled by some external force--a force alien to himself. This situation is rather ironic since the original aim of the individual was to escape from unbearable controls.

The associative values of the words and images in this chapter are endless and I wish only to isolate a few of those which relate to images or themes previously discussed.

The emphasis on Generals and other men of war which was evident in the first chapter re-appears here, suggesting an almost circular entrapment caused by the totally irresponsible abandonment of one dimension of reality for another. Another echo from past writings is found in the mention of Hercules having been put into a pocket. This, in combination with the predominance of the first person singular pronoun once again suggests delusions of power and grandeur. The ongoing desire for transcendence is found in the line "J'ai écrit bien en bâtarde sur ma malle et je me suis fait enregistrer en passant la tête" (p. 49). The overwhelming desire of the individual to escape into pseudo-transcendence rather than to search for an integration which would result in transcendent values, results finally in an alienation that takes him as far away from the possibility of an integrated life as physical death did in "La Mort."

As was mentioned in earlier discussions, the Surrealists and R.D. Laing are deeply concerned about the fragmentation and alienation of the individual in society. In their various theoretical writings these men have expressed a profound belief in the importance of experiencing and exploring the unconscious dimension of mind. Indeed, they would seem to regard such an exploration as a crucial step in the quest to attain

a fuller, more integrated life. They seek to disprove the existence of the commonly accepted dichotomy between sanity and madness. Laing has, more than once, emphasized his belief that madness is not an absolute term, that the definition and determination of madness, like the definition and determination of sanity is ambiguous. He believes that madness is a type of experience which any "normal" person may go through in a lifetime. The Surrealist, André Breton, wrote in the preface to "Les Possessions" that:

> . . . ils espèrent, d'une part, prouver que l'esprit dressé poétiquement chez l'homme normal, est capable de reproduire dans ses grands traits les manifestations verbales les plus paradoxales, les plus excentriques, qu'il est au pouvoir de cet esprit de se soumettre à volonté les principales idées délirantes sans qu'il y aille pour lui d'un trouble durable, sans que cela soit susceptible de compromettre en rien sa faculté d'équilibre.[20]

In their aesthetic endeavours they are trying to take us on a journey into this different, heretofore largely ignored, dimension of mind which, to avoid an endless flow of argumentative rhetoric, I shall continue to call madness. However, despite the obvious similarities in their philosophical attitudes towards madness, their literary attempts are widely divergent and the further examination of these divergent tendencies may lead to a greater understanding and appreciation of the "Possessions" section of L'Immaculée Conception.

In speaking about his work The Bird of Paradise, Laing said that "It was merely the description of some of the things that make up my own inner life."[21] The "story" is, therefore, only the textual representation of something that exists in his memory; a recording of past experiences and perceptions. Consequently the events in it are bound to

a certain time and space. These limiting factors reduce the value of the text by making the experiences finite, rather than transcendent, since transcendence, by definition, can have no such restrictions. Moreover, the conscious act of writing occurs after these experiences are finished. The images in the text have been subjected to a process of conscious filtration, they have been analyzed, dissected and reassembled within the work. This filtration process would, we must assume, remove many elements of the unconscious from his memory and therefore from the text. This process may also account for the rather erratic route which his "journey" takes, for while some of the images do appear to have come automatically from the unconscious, e.g., "Head with legs singing merrily in the streets, led along by a beggar" (p. 147), these images are buried among others which more closely resemble personal diatribes against the human condition (e.g., pp. 145-146).

The surrealist technique of automatic co-authorship surmounts the dual problem which results from the delayed recording of the mad experience since it records the experience at the instant of exploration. Consequently it escapes the misleading influence which the intrusion of conscious logic or critical lucidity could well introduce. In co-authored automatic writing, there can be no filtration process and thus the workings of the unconscious dimension of mind may be recorded without fear of contamination by the external world. An example of textual contamination by the conscious mind can be found in the different ways that humour appears in the two works. In The Bird of Paradise, the passages are seldom humourous and on the rare occasion

when they are the humour is bitter. Laing injects humour into his text via the conscious joke. However, in "Les Possessions," humour is inherent within many of the passages.

This conscious knowledge which Laing allows to intrude upon his text may be the cause of one very large problem in his text and which greatly reduces its value to the reader. Laing appears to forget--at least in his literary presentation--that a journey or a quest must be progressive; it must have a point of departure where the people involved can meet. Laing, instead of providing this point of departure, merely carries us on board a first-class luxury liner, to the middle of his own personal ocean, and then proceeds to blindfold us and drop us casually overboard. The Surrealists, on the other hand, slowly enter the water with us from the shore ("La Débilité mentale"), thus enabling transfer and eventual immersion to occur. We can, therefore, accept and experience this new element (madness) without fear, for the gradual transition from land to water, from the external to the internal, from the conscious to the unconscious, from sanity to madness becomes a natural process where some degree of integration is possible. The abrupt change which The Bird of Paradise requires, results in a constant attempt to scramble back onto the secure bridge of external, conscious reality which Laing so thoughtfully provides with his polemic passages. By his tendency to alternate between the comprehensible and the incomprehensible (the sane and the mad), Laing actually reinforces the very dichotomy which he says he is trying to destroy, for in the text the reader finds the two extremes and very little mediation between them. His text also seems to intensify the

individual's feelings of alienation rather than to reduce them, for his is clearly a personal journey which others cannot join. The Surrealists in "Les Possessions" travel slowly, but reasonably steadily, from simulation to simulation, and each mental illness explored reflects the ever-changing relationship between conscious and unconscious control. However, these changes are always towards the increasing control of the unconscious. They travel progressively forward into madness, thereby enabling the reader, indeed forcing him, to travel with the text and to recognize that he too can experience certain of the effects which are commonly called "mad." "Les Possessions" has internal unity, rather than the external fragmentation evidenced in Laing's work, as one of its outstanding characteristics.

The Bird of Paradise is further weakened by its apparent glorification of madness as is seen in Laing's choice of this particular bird to symbolize the mad state. In addition, his decision to use the Bird of Paradise as his main symbol for insanity strongly reflects his own personal attitude towards the experience, but it also wrongly implies that madness is a static condition with only one important dimension, rather than a many-faceted experience which is constantly changing and developing. In "Les Possessions," madness is not glorified or celebrated; it is explored and there are no decisions or judgements made within this section itself about its value. In "Le Délire d'interprétation" alone, the reader finds at least five easily identifiable and different ways in which madness may be experienced or regarded. The imagery throughout this section is in a perpetual

state of flux and this fluctuation mirrors the steps in the quest for greater knowledge and understanding.

The imagery associated with religion plays a major role in both the psychiatrist's and the Surrealists' texts. In the former, religious imagery appears in specific places, while in the latter it is found throughout the work. Although it is generally placed and dealt with in a negative fashion, the fact that it does appear in the "automatic" work, L'Immaculée Conception, would seem to suggest that the concept of religion (and the existence of an omnipotent power inherent within this concept) is deeply imbedded in the collective unconscious. The religious experience would then be contained in the larger experience of the unconscious. Perhaps the negative comments regarding religion should be understood as reflecting the position of religion today where, instead of being part of the collective unconscious, or a part of integrated man, it has become only another fragment in life--a ceremony to be observed for one hour once a week.

The psychiatrist Henri Ey once said that "La folie est sous toutes ses formes atteinte à la liberté. Elle est et ne peut être envisagée que dans cette perspective."[22] This attempt to attain liberty through madness is the basis for both The Bird of Paradise and "Les Possessions." However, in Laing madness becomes negative, for he celebrates it to such an extent that, instead of being an experience which may enrich the individual life, it becomes an escape, a rejection of reality. In essence, Laing is suggesting a rejection of the world as a solution for the problem of alienation. Laing's madness is a personal experience and it must be studied with this limited

perspective in mind. To understand Laing's writing is merely to understand Laing, and does not result in a better comprehension of the collective unconscious. On the other hand, madness in "Les Possessions" is a positive attempt at attaining liberty, for it does not glorify, nor does it vilify the unconscious. Instead, madness is explored and experienced to the point where it can be seen as an integral part of man. The order which the reader may find in these simulations must be understood as reflecting the hidden order of the unconscious mind, for no conscious order was imposed upon them at the time of "creation." The fact that these simulations do have an innate structure or order which the conscious mind can interpret, however vaguely, proves that the Surrealists were correct in believing that there is some point where things may cease to be perceived as contradictions, but instead join together as one incredibly complex, but very beautiful image.

In The Bird of Paradise Laing is attempting to present his own inner life, the workings of the individual unconscious. His text is like a personal literary catharsis. It is limited to his own experiences and the resulting individualized "madness" restricts the value of his text. In "Les Possessions," the Surrealists are attempting to integrate the different dimensions of reality, specifically sanity and madness through the exploration of the collective unconscious. The imagery in their text is not individual but universal and can, therefore, exist and be experienced without the authors. It is an honest attempt to attain the greater knowledge which is accessible to every person who is willing to undertake the journey into the

unconscious dimension of mind. Unlike Laing's work, it in no way suggests that the completion of this journey will allow the individual to enjoy a utopian life, for it shows that without mediation between the conscious and the unconscious understanding, madness is as restrictive and as one-dimensional as is a life under completely conscious control. The ironic ambiguity of the title itself ("Les Possessions") shows how this experience can be liberating or incarcerating, depending upon the reasons for which the journey is undertaken--for escape or for the knowledge which comes with greater experience.

NOTES

[1] Walter Jackson Bate, ed., Criticism: The Major Texts (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1970), p. 17.

[2] Garth Wilkinson cited by Frederick J. Beharriell, "Freud's Debts to Literature," Psychoanalysis, 4 (Special Issue 1957), p. 19.

[3] Ibid., pp. 18-27.

[4] André Breton, Les Pas perdus (Paris: Gallimard, 1949), pp. 117-118.

[5] Anna Balakian, André Breton: Magus of Surrealism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 28.

[6] E. Jones, The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud (New York: Basic Books; London: Hogarth Press, 1953), I, 45.

[7] For an excellent example of this situation see E. Kraepelin, Lectures on Clinical Psychiatry, ed. T. Johnstone (London: Ballière, Tindall and Cox, 1906), pp. 30-31.

[8] Peter Sedgewick, "R.D. Laing: Self, Symptom and Society," in R.D. Laing and Anti-Psychiatry, ed. R. Boyers (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), pp. 6-8.

[9] R.D. Laing and A. Esterson, Sanity, Madness and the Family (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1976), p. 22.

[10] R.D. Laing, The Politics of Experience and the Bird of Paradise (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), pp. 15-19.

[11] Ibid., p. 50.

[12] André Breton, Les Manifestes du surréalisme (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), p. 76.

[13] R.D. Laing, The Politics of Experience and the Bird of Paradise (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), pp. 103, 106.

[14] Ibid. All subsequent bracketed references in this chapter are to this edition.

[15] Phillip Polatin, A Guide to Treatment in Psychiatry (Philadelphia: J.P. Lippincott Company, 1966), pp. 33-53, 70-77; D.K. Henderson and R.D. Gillespie, Text-book of Psychiatry, 3rd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 230; Ian Gregory, Fundamentals of Psychiatry (Philadelphia-London-Toronto: W.B. Saunders Company, 1968), pp. 192-208; Thomas Lathrop Stedman, Stedman's Medical Dictionary (Baltimore: William and Wilkin's Company, 1976); R. von Kraeft-Ebing, Text-book of Insanity (Philadelphia: F.A. Davis Company, 1905), trans. C.G. Chaddock, pp. 312-426, 546; Veillon and Nobel, Medizinisches Wörterbuch/Dictionnaire médicale/Medical Dictionary (Geneva: Verlag Hans Huber Bern, 1976), pp. 219, 453, 664.

[16] André Breton and Paul Eluard, L'Immaculée Conception (Paris: Seghers, 1961), p. 30. All subsequent references will be to this edition.

[17] The vital importance placed on pure sound values is also made very evident in Los Pasos perdidos, for the protagonist on his journey back to Genesis, discovers that words themselves are really not of as great consequence as the idea of uncontaminated sound. He witnesses the Birth of Music and learns that it came, not from the word, but rather from the different pitches and the different types of emotion revealing sound.

[18] Ad de Vries, Dictionary of Symbols and Images, 2nd ed. New York: North Holland Publishing Company, 1976), p. 508.

[19] Ibid., p. 10.

[20] André Breton and Paul Eluard, L'Immaculée Conception (Paris: Seghers, 1961), p. 25.

[21] Ronald David Laing, quoted by James Gordon in "Who is Mad? Who is Sane?," The Atlantic Monthly, January 1971, p. 59.

[22] Henri Ey, quoted by Ferdinand Alquié, Le Surréalisme (Paris: Mouton et Cie, 1968), p. 305.

CHAPTER III

THE QUEST FOR UNDERSTANDING: READING AND TRANSLATION OF L'IMMACULEE CONCEPTION

The surrealist work L'Immaculée Conception may well be one of the masterpieces of Surrealism, vital to an overall comprehension of the literary movement, yet it has never been professionally translated. The text has been virtually ignored by those whose task it is to carry literature across linguistic frontiers. The possible reasons for this great omission are multiple and complex, but perhaps the fact that criticism is not yet completely equal to the demands of automatic writing--especially with the added complication of dual authorship--even within uni-lingual boundaries, stands as the major factor. However, one of the intentions of this chapter is to show that regardless of the complexity of the task, the problems are not totally insurmountable if both translators and readers are willing to expend sufficient time and effort.

L'Immaculée Conception may be understood as a quest for transcendence through the enlargement of unconscious perception and recognition of its value. The ensuing search leads to an exploratory journey into the unconscious dimension of mind where, the Surrealists believe, a force exists outside of the external restrictions imposed by society. They feel that an experiential understanding of this

unconscious dimension may enable them to achieve integration between the two dimensions--the conscious or finite and the unconscious or infinite--thus eliminating the fragmentation which characterizes existence limited to the conscious level.

Throughout the centuries, hundreds of other works have been written which were also based on the idea of the quest. A great number of these have been translated and many of these translations have successfully captured the spirit of the original. However, these texts were always based on or derived from external, objective reality, with the result that the language in both the primary (source) text and the secondary (translated) one was bound to the rules of external verisimilitude as determined by society. Thus, these works were, by their very nature, limited to the denotative and connotative levels of comprehension. They were, from the moment of their conception, subjected to conscious logic and perception.

In contrast, the quest in L'Immaculée Conception is completely internalized. It occurs in a dimension where chronological time and geographic place have been displaced by universal time and indeterminate space. The language system which had evolved to depict limited external reality and to communicate conscious thought, and which was eminently suited for the presentation of the quest in traditional literature, was no longer sufficient. The Surrealists' literary and philosophic goals could not be expressed or experienced through the denotative/connotative language system, for this system is a development of the consciously directed mind and as such is frequently subject to restrictive, externally imposed rules. The

quest in L'Immaculée Conception is conducted in another dimension where there are no consciously imposed constraints and where whatever order there may be is innate, rather than imposed. They are engaged in a quest to find that point where all things may cease to be understood as contradictions. Since the traditional language system itself is based upon distinctions (contradictions) between its various elements, a new approach to and understanding of language was required which would be liberated from all externally imposed restrictions and which would liberate those who operated within it. The Surrealists needed a language level which would reflect the transcendent or infinite values in the unconscious dimension, and they found it in the associative language level which, in turn, introduced the concept of the infinite paradigm into literature.

The concept of infinity in language is a complicated one, but it is crucial to an understanding of the nature of automatic writing and therefore to the translation of this writing. Perhaps a few words should be devoted, at this time, to an examination of associative language in automatic writing as opposed to language in the more traditional literatures, with specific attention being given to the difference between finite and infinite language paradigms.

In writing which comes under conscious control, the analysis and comprehension of language is, generally speaking, confined both intra- and extra-textually to the denotative and connotative levels--levels which are derived from and bound to external, objective referents. On these levels the specificity of the message in the primary text largely determines the range of the semiotic paradigm in which the

writer, the reader, and eventually the translator may work. The values of the symbols in both the primary and the secondary text are determined by others which occur in the same semantic field. This control of one word value by another severely limits their meanings and this limitation results in a finite paradigm. However, since the principle aim of language at these levels is to send a message which appeals to and may be logically analyzed by the conscious mind, the inherent restrictions are quite compatible with their function. In other words, language can be used to transfer messages which are related to external, consciously perceived reality (e.g.: "The barking boxer--dog is implied--is burying a bone") transmits information which has easily identifiable external referents. It can therefore be understood and consciously analyzed on denotative and connotative language levels. Let us now look at the same symbols in a different arrangement: "The burying boxer is barking a bone."

Obviously, on the above-mentioned language levels this sentence is incomprehensible and rather silly. However, on an associative level it can become comprehensible not through analysis, but rather through free association and subsequent interpretation. One rather facile, but nonetheless quite plausible, interpretation could be "The dying man is saying farewell to a friend," resulting from a paradigm where burying suggests death, boxer suggests man, barking suggests speech or communication and the attachment which dogs have for bones suggests the affection between two people.

Automatic writing is distinguished by the absence of conscious control. It is based upon the principle of free association in

language, comes from and is directed towards the unconscious. The text calls for an automatic associative response and not a controlled conscious analysis. However, such an analysis may occur after the initial experiential reading. In an associative response, language is freed from referentiality. Each word/image carries values determined independently from its semantic field, since the omnipresent ordering elements which appear consistently in consciously controlled writings are often non-existent in automatic works. This means, in essence, that the paradigm in the writing and the reception of automatic authorship is infinite. Destruction of the "normal" semantic values which are characteristic of controlled writing is readily visible throughout L'Immaculée Conception in such phrases as "De toutes les façons qu'a le tournesol d'aimer la lumière, le regret est la plus belle ombre sur le cadran solaire" (p. 11).[1]

Like the barking boxer image mentioned earlier, this image is incomprehensible in denotative and connotative terms. However, the associative response/effect leads to a prolonged process of free or automatic association during which time heretofore unknown potentialities of words are explored. Each word on this level has an infinite number of values which transcend their external, seemingly contradictory or nonsensical arrangement. The word sunflower could suggest a person or an emotion (e.g., love), or nature, while a beautiful shadow could suggest life, or death, or emptiness or a dream. One possible associative interpretation of this image could read: "Of all the ways that a human being has of loving life, the passing of a dream is still the most beautiful way of passing the hours."

L'Immaculée Conception is filled with phrases and images which can only be understood through associative processes. Each word, each image and each phrase leads both the authors and the readers further into the unconscious and carries them towards a new way of understanding. The associative images and phrases are an integral part of the quest which the Surrealists are undertaking and they certainly deserve to be granted the dignity of receiving the reader's attention. Unfortunately, this does not always happen. The widely published critic Mary Ann Caws in the introductory paragraph to her article "Antonin Artaud: Suppression and Subtext," wrote:

> The following study is based upon two hypothetical premises: first, that the inequality in stylistic density of some of the longer so-called "automatic" prose texts of the surrealists may justify (a) an initial découpage, in this case the choice of those parts of the text which present, against the neutral background of the rest, passages placed in stylistic relief, composed of salient elements analyzable on the phonetic, syntactic, and semantic levels and (b) the subsequent reassembling of those parts into a coherent text; second, that the analysis of certain marked elements of the text may show them to be the visible protrusions on the surface of a generating theme for the "unconsciously" or spontaneously produced images of the automatic text.[2]

If she sincerely believes what she has written to be true, any surreal text falling into her hands is in serious danger. The guillotine tactics she appears to apply to automatic writing would reduce the Surrealists' texts to a condition only one step above poor realism. The act of reading on any level is usually a quest for knowledge, and if a text is difficult the onus is on the reader to rise to its level, thereby increasing his or her own level of comprehension. The reader is not entitled to amputate large chunks of the textual body regardless

of how incomprehensible they may appear to be. Reduction of the text, in the manner Caws seems to be advocating, is wholesale editing of the worst kind, and in fact has very little to do with an honest or even an open-minded reading of literature. Her well defined process of reduction lends itself more readily to literary dissection than to any appreciative analysis. Even psychiatrists, who were by no means the Surrealists' idols, do not simply ignore the incomprehensible elements of the unconscious mind.

Throughout her article, she either remains blissfully oblivious to or intentionally forgets about one of the most important surrealist goals--that of inciting or effecting an exploration into the unconscious mind. When working with one of Artaud's poems, she arbitrarily decides that the work can be divided into essential and non-essential parts. Such divisions cannot help but disrupt the quest which the Surrealists were engaged in, for instead of attempting to mediate between the comprehensible and the incomprehensible in order to find a point where things may cease to be understood as contradictions--where the incomprehensible becomes comprehensible--she simply removes the contradictions from the text. Following her approach to the reading of automatic literature is rather like signing up for a world tour and being taken to Saskatoon. Consciously limited selective association, such as Caws applies to the texts, only takes the reader on a short excursion and fails to acknowledge either the depth or the seriousness of the surrealist quest.

Clearly, the task of the reader (potential translator) of automatic writing is demanding if he is not to evade the issue in this

manner. However, Caws' response to automatic writing is fairly typical of today's trend in surrealist criticism and the fact that such a highly respected critic has so much difficulty penetrating the text within instead of across languages shows how complex a task translation of automatic texts is. This complexity is increased even further with the introduction of co-authorship--such as we find in L'Immaculée Conception--into automatic texts. Since the reading of such texts requires a break from the traditional method of initial conscious analysis, the practice of translation must also require a different approach. In order to see why this change is necessary, a brief sketch of the traditional aims and practices of translation will be presented.

The practice of translation is generally regarded as a necessary evil, or to state it somewhat less harshly, as a practical necessity, considering that the only alternative would be a world-wide crash course in Esperanto or the stringent following of literary isolationist policies enforced by linguistic barriers. Since these alternatives would be neither desirable nor feasible to implement, the major task confronting translators is that of producing the best secondary text possible under far from ideal conditions. In an utopian situation, all languages would have direct one-to-one correspondence between semantic and grammatical elements. Unfortunately for translators, this is obviously not the case, and even the most basic translation involves a sound understanding of the various elements which form the languages, not to mention a knowledge of cultural and literary traditions when literature is being translated.

Taking an extremely simplified view, the translator's usual task is to render a set of symbols which are comprehensible in the source language into another set of symbols which is comprehensible in the receptor language--without unnecessary violation of form or content. If the translator has command of the languages in which he is working (and one assumes he does, although certain translations tend to make the issue rather problematic), the task before him seems quite straightforward, and so it is when he is working with material which can be objectively translated. "Objective" translation occurs in texts where the entirety of the message may be transmitted and received denotatively. When direct equivalence can be made between two texts--where form can be subservient to content--without degrading the message or effecting a change in aesthetic properties, a translation can be done without much difficulty. This ideal situation occurs exclusively in technical translations where aesthetic considerations are virtually non-existent, since here all that is required of the secondary text is that it be as readily comprehensible as it was in the primary/source text. A technical translation can range from being as endearingly simple as the instructions for opening a box of Special K to as intricate and complex as the procedure for constructing a Boeing 747, but the only requirement made of the translator is that he make the instructions conform to the rules of the receptor language in a concise and precise fashion.

However, for those translators who work with literary texts the task becomes immeasurably more complex, for their initial reading has the added dimension of connotative meaning. This is especially true

for those who would translate poetry or prose texts with strong poetic elements.

Both form and content can play vitally important roles in literary works, and because of the different natures of the various languages it is impossible to translate both the form and the content from a source language directly into a receptor language. Sometimes form is emphasized over content, often to the detriment of the receptor text and to the chagrin of its readers, since the message being transmitted is so garbled in content that appreciation of its form is hindered. Clearly, there is not much to be gained by retaining a perfect carbon copy rhyme scheme if it means reducing a great poem to something resembling a limerick in message. An excellent example of this interlingual degradation might be found in some of Roy Campbell's translations of Baudelaire's works--"A Celle qui est trop gaie" in Les Fleurs du mal,[3] to name just one. On the other hand, over-emphasis on content without due respect for form harbours the risk of turning Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet into a script for an afternoon soap opera. Fortunately, a sound knowledge of the pragmatics and semantics of both languages will usually enable the translator to produce a secondary text, which is acceptable in form and in content to the uni-lingual reader in the receptor language. The translator's understanding of the primary text as a whole and his general knowledge of the literary movement in which he is working helps him to decode and then to recode the message via the expected logical continuity--created and maintained by adherence to the usual rules of temporality and referentiality--of the text.

As we can see in the following example, the sentence "The lake is blue," is readily comprehensible on an objective denotative level for all speakers of the English language. This sentence also exists and can be understood on a connotative level. On this level, each individual who reads this group of words will form a somewhat different mental image of a blue lake, varying in shape, shade, size, etc. They are translating within the boundaries of a uni-lingual paradigm. If a translator were to render "The lake is blue" into another language which had a larger range of symbols for blue, the symbol he would choose would reflect his own personal understanding of the message in the image. The reader of the translated text would, in turn, have a slightly different mental image of a blue lake that would correspond to his own subjective, connotative experience with language, but which would not conflict with the objective denotative foundation of the message.

However, in automatic writing, the denotative and connotative language levels are removed with the result that the reading is, above all else, interpretation. As seen from the discussion of Mary Ann Caw's article, one of the greatest dangers of interpretation is the ever-present possibility of textual reduction. Since the primary step which all translators take is the reading of the text, this reading must be thorough. This is especially true for texts produced by automatic writing as the interpretation/translation will be based upon the supposedly exhaustive reading and the effect of this reading upon the receptor.

In the uni-authored automatic text, the reader (potential translator) may be able to develop a rapport with the author and thus find his writings less difficult to understand. They may be capable of travelling together through the text in the surreal equivalent of James Joyce's stream of consciousness.

However, in the co-authored L'Immaculée Conception, the reader is required to explore the writing of two sources within one text. Therefore, he cannot hope to develop the more simplistic one-to-one rapport, but must instead attempt through free association to gain an understanding of the more complex dual (perhaps universal) unconscious. The paradigm of variable symbols is increased within the text itself which means that automatic association not only occurs extra- but also intra-textually. The original S^1 paradigm joins with the S^2 paradigm in the literary work before the extra-textual receptor (R^3) is even introduced.[4] Eluard's sentences "Les voyages m'ont toujours mené trop loin. La certitude d'arriver ne m'a jamais semblé que le centième coup de sonnette à une porte qui ne s'ouvre pas" (p. 22), when read by Breton, effected the response "La souffrance même était hantée. Quand cette femme à corps de persienne est venue s'éventer sur mon lit, j'ai compris que je devais avoir froid. J'ai eu froid. Mais la jeunesse veillait: en vérité j'avais à peine souffert" (p. 22). By writing this, Breton makes the jumps from receptor to source, thus introducing the second infinite paradigm into the text. Reception, which is usually an extra-textual process, now becomes an intra-textual one, vital to the creative process. This instantaneous process of reciprocal influence is a unique feature of automatic co-authorship.

(For a selection of essays, some of which are concerned with surrealist writing, see About French Poetry from Dada to Tel Quel.)

Up to this point, all of the initial reception and source processes have been conducted (ideally) on an associative level. This association process results in the individual interpretation, and it therefore results in the interpretative translation. The entire theory of translation and, for that matter, of reading, is based upon the venerable tenet of comprehension of the text on denotative and connotative levels. It is based upon conscious analysis. Therefore, when the translation operation is imposed upon an unconscious automatic text, a problem immediately develops. Finite critical lucidity restricts infinite experience, especially if the initial reading was conducted according to Caws' format. Even if the translator does attempt to explore associatively all of the images, an unintentional but inescapable intrusion of conscious interlingual logic will be imposed upon the "translated" text. The words which the translator chooses and which comprise the body of this secondary text not only reflect the original experiential material, but also are an indirect indication of the effect which the text had upon him. Therefore, any translation of L'Immaculée Conception will be a reduction of two minds as exploratively filtered through one, and synthesized therein. Proof that this synthesis can be accomplished through free association may be illustrated by drawing an example from the work. Breton wrote: "La souffrance même était hantée. Quand cette femme à corps de persienne est venue s'éventer sur mon lit, j'ai compris que je devais avoir froid. J'ai eu froid. Mais la jeunesse veillait: en vérité j'avais

à peine souffert" (p. 22). Eluard then recorded: "Il faut avouer que j'ai gardé sa tête sur ma poitrine. Là, cette clarté, c'est sa forme nocturne qui ne peut pas disparaître et qui soutient la nuit et qui fouille la lumière où je ne suis pas" (p. 22).

One interpretation of this could read: "Suffering itself was haunted. When this woman with a body like a venetian blind came to expose itself on my bed, I understand that I should feel cold. I felt cold. But youth was vigilant: in truth I hardly suffered. I have to admit that I kept her head on my chest. There, that light is her nocturnal form that cannot disappear and that supports the night and that searches through the light where I am not." Without knowing that two authors were involved, a reader probably would not notice any break in the text. By choosing (arbitrarily) some key words in the French text and selecting some symbols which might appear in their associative paradigms, I hope to show how another interpretation might be arrived at:

souffrance: peine, mal, douleur, enfer
hantée: obséder, habiter, peupler, fantôme, penser
femme: jeune fille, dame, Marie
persienne: volet, fenêtre, sombre, barres, barrière
lit: couche, dormir, nuit, cercueil
froid: l'hiver, fin, solitude, mort
gardé: veillée, éviter, soigner
s'éventer: éviter, pourrir, évaporer
tête: personne, esprit, mémoire, mort
nocturne: nuit, sombre, noir
soutient: aider, encourager, supporter, enseigner
lumière: clarté, jour, espoir, vérité

Obviously, without denotative and connotative references, the English paradigm will be heavily influenced by associations which the translator made. One possible English language paradigm might be:

souffrance: pain, fear, hell, people, suffering
hantée: past, ghost, thought, haunt
femme: woman, girl, Eve, garden
persienne: bars, curtains, shadows, window
lit: sleep, quiet, coffin, bed
froid: winter, end, death, cold
gardé: care, keep, guard
s'éventer: go flat, rot, disappear
tête: memory, spirit, mind, head
nocturne: ghost, quiet, night, stars, nocturnal
soutient: help, support, sustain
lumière: hope, dream, sun, gold, truth, light

The readers of both the original and the translated text could arrive at an understanding of the sentences that might read: "Hell itself was nothing more than a thought. When this hard, unfeeling spirit came to my bed, I knew that I was going to die. But hope never left me: in truth I did not suffer, nor was I afraid. I must admit that I kept it with me. The knowledge of death cannot disappear, it stays with me throughout the night and even takes others' lives."

However, if the original reader/translator chose to avoid the images rather than to explore them in his initial encounter with the text, the uni-lingual reader of the translated text would receive a reduced analysis, not an interpretative translation. This reduction would, in turn, disrupt or destroy the inherent order which the Surrealists believe exists in the unconscious dimension of mind. The quest therefore would be in vain.

From a technical perspective, L'Immaculée Conception is saturated with puns, word plays, auditory and echoing images. No matter how thorough the translation may be, many of these simply cannot be transferred from French to English. An examination of some excerpts from this work would, perhaps, illuminate how translation/interpretation cannot transfer the special genius of the unconscious mind.

1. Toi, par exemple, tu n'es pas là: tu tiens un arrosoir, tu as une jambe coupée, ça fait deux jambes que j'enjambe au mois de janvier. En février je ramasse les fèves. (p. 33)

You, for example, you are not there: you hold a watering can, you have lost a leg, that makes two legs that I stride on in the month of January. In February I gather beans.

The acoustic effects are completely lost in the translated text. The idea of repetition so evident in the source text is only vaguely discernible in English. Strictly as a matter of conjecture, I would like to suggest that the emphasis on the sound jam could associatively introduce the word jamais, which through continuation of the process could be associated with toujours or éternellement or éternité, leading eventually to the idea that "you have lost eternity."

2. Un masseur m'a fait cadeau d'une massue. (p. 34)

A masseur made me/gave me the gift of a club.

The play in French in suggestion (masseur-massue) and in sound cannot withstand interlingual translation.

3. J'ai fait mes études chez un avoué qui me disait: N'avouez jamais. Au conseil de révision j'ai été réformé pour la vision. (p. 34)

I studied with a solicitor who used to say to me: Never confess. At the draft board I was rejected because of my eyesight.

Although the word plays are lost in translation, the irony remains--by not taking his lawyer's advice and by admitting to defective vision/eyesight he managed to avoid the draft. His vision/foresight, and honesty saved him from the war.

4. Une porte de verdure ferme la ferme de part en part. Je recueille les paris. Le fermier a un chapeau que j'ai porté, c'est un cadeau de la fermière. (p. 35)

> A door of greeness shuts the farm through and through. I take bets. The farmer has a hat that I wore, it is a gift from the farmer's wife.

The images and word plays in this passage are complicated, e.g.: the door closes the farm--normally a door takes rather than does action; the word paris, while not meaning the city, does, by its sounds, suggest Paris, and since so much of the effect of the text relies on sound games it could well be a key word--the idea of Paris contrasts with farm, with closed and open spaces.

> 5. Les enfants qui jouent autour d'eux reçoivent des claques. (p. 35)
>
> The children who are playing around them receive (some) boots.

The French word claques has three meanings: galoshes, slaps, opera hats. The opera hat could refer back to the farmer's hat; galoshes could have contrast value since they are clothing for feet; whereas hats cover heads, and the associative value slaps could be intended as punishment for the children. In the English boots, only two of these values are retained.

The above are just some of the examples of the extensive footnoting that would need to be done if a comprehensive translation were to be undertaken. Such an undertaking would indeed be time-consuming and very difficult, but it would not be impossible. The translator could, for instance, introduce an equivalent amount of auditory plays throughout the text, since even if direct replacement is impossible, the insertion would help to provide an approximation of the overall effect, e.g., "Frappé d'un coup de soleil au haut de ciel. . ." (p. 33)/Struck by sunstroke.

Naturally the associations which result from the repetition of certain sounds in the source language cannot be compensated for in this way. However, through very extensive footnoting, the underlying theme of the quest and the journey which the Surrealists undertake should still be accessible to the uni-lingual readers of the secondary text on the conscious level--if both the "translator" and these readers remember that the interpretative translation should be taken only as a point of departure. Unfortunately, this approach again stresses content over form in English, while in many of the French passages, form is the obvious motor. In heavily footnoted English translations the cues to this are missing and a search for sense in content on a conscious level is undertaken. This search in many cases was not meant to be, for in the primary text sound, not sense as we understand it, was the base for the resulting paradigm, e.g.: "Une porte de verdure ferme la ferme de part en part" (p. 35).

Having now isolated some of the major dangers involved in the reception, comprehension and translation of L'Immaculée Conception, perhaps we should now briefly examine three different interpretations of one complete passage in "Les Possessions." For the purpose of simplifying the discussion, the three passages will be referred to as Interpretative translations 1, 2, and 3, abbreviated to I^{tr1}, I^{tr2}, and I^{tr3}. Samuel Beckett translated the first,[5] Richard Howard the second,[6] and I have provided the third. The underlinings found in the original and in the three secondary texts are intended to draw attention to several of the major differences in the texts.

The best concrete illustration of the theoretical points discussed so far could better be made by several other sections in L'Immaculée Conception. However, only one set of parallel translations exists and thus the discussion must be centered upon this section. The fact that the simulation of "La Paralysie générale" is the only simulation to be attempted by two translators could well be based upon the fact that it is one of the less provocative, seemingly more denotative passages in the whole work. The word plays and sound effects found in "La Manie aiguë" would actually be the ideal passage for the illustration of the aforementioned theories since it provides more fertile ground for the idea of translating sound dynamics than does the one with which we must work. Due to the relative scarcity of sound emphasis in "La Paralysie générale," the reader may be disappointed in the lack of vast difference which he would expect to find Beckett's and Howard's and my own translation.

ESSAI DE SIMULATION DE LA PARALYSIE GENERALE

Ma grande adorée belle comme tout sur la terre et dans les plus belles étoiles de la terre que j'adore ma grande femme adorée par toutes les puissances des étoiles belle avec la beauté des milliards de reines qui parent la terre l'adoration que j'ai pour ta beauté me met à genoux pour te supplier de penser à moi je me mets à tes genoux j'adore ta beauté pense à moi toi ma beauté adorable ma grande beauté que j'adore je roule les diamants dans la mousse plus haute que les forêts dont tes cheveux les plus hauts pensent à moi--ne m'oublie pas ma petite femme sur mes genoux à l'occasion au coin du feu sur le sable en émeraude--regarde-toi dans ma main qui me sert à me baser sur tout au monde pour que tu me reconnaisses pour ce que je suis ma femme brune-blonde ma belle et ma bête pense à moi dans les paradis la tête dans mes mains.

Je n'avais pas assez des cent cinquante châteaux où nous allions nous aimer on m'en construira demain cent mille autres j'ai chassé des forêts de baobabs de tes yeux les paons les panthères et les oiseaux-lyres je les enfermerai dans mes châteaux forts et nous irons nous promener tous deux dans les forêts d'Asie d'Europe d'Amérique qui entourent nos châteaux dans les forêts admirables de tes yeux qui sont habitués à ma splendeur.

Tu n'as pas à attendre la surprise que je veux te faire pour ton anniversaire qui tombe aujourd'hui le même jour que le mien--je te la fais tout de suite puisque j'ai attendu quinze fois l'an mille avant de te faire la surprise de te demander de penser à moi à cache-cache--je veux que tu penses à moi ma jeune femme éternelle en riant. J'ai compté avant de m'endormir des nuées et des nuées de chars pleins de betteraves pour le soleil et je veux te mener la nuit sur la plage d'astrakan qu'on est en train de construire à deux horizons pour tes yeux de pétrole à faire la guerre je t'y conduirai par des chemins de diamants pavés de primevères d'émeraudes et le manteau d'hermine dont je veux te couvrir est un oiseau de proie les diamants que tes pieds fouleront je les ai fait tailler en forme de papillon. Pense à moi qui ne songe qu'à ton éclat où s'endort le luxe ensoleillé d'une terre et de tous les astres que j'ai conquis pour toi je t'adore et j'adore tes yeux et j'ai ouvert tes yeux ouverts à tous ceux qu'ils ont vus des habits d'or et de cristal des habits qu'ils devront jeter quand tes yeux auront ternis de leur mépris. Je saigne dans mon coeur aux seules initiales de ton nom sur un drapeau aux initiales de ton nom qui sont toutes les lettres dont z est la première dans l'infini des alphabets et des civilisations où je t'aimerai encore puisque tu veux être ma femme et penser à moi dans les pays où il n'y a plus de moyenne. Mon coeur saigne sur ta bouche et se referme sur ta bouche sur tous les marronniers roses de l'avenue de ta bouche où nous allons dans la poussière éclatante nous coucher parmi les météores de ta beauté que j'adore ma grande créature si belle que je suis heureux de parer mes trésors de ta présence de ta pensée et de ton nom qui multiplie les facettes de l'extase de mes trésors de ton nom que j'adore parce qu'il trouve un écho dans tous les miroirs de beauté de ma splendeur ma femme originelle mon échafaudage en bois de rose tu es ma faute de ma faute de ma très grande faute comme Jésus-Christ est la femme de ma croix--douze fois douze mille cent quarante-neuf fois je t'ai aimée de passions sur le chemin et je suis crucifié au nord à l'est à l'ouest et au nord pour ton baiser de radium et je te veux et tu es dans mon miroir de perles le souffle de l'homme qui ne te remontera pas à la surface et qui t'aime dans l'adoration ma femme couchée debout quand tu es assise en te peignant.

Tu viendras tu penses à moi tu viendras tu accouras sur tes treize jambes pleines et sur toutes tes jambes vides qui battent l'air du balancement de tes bras une multitude de bras qui veulent m'enlacer moi à genoux entre tes jambes et tes bras pour t'enlacer sans crainte que mes locomotives t'empêchent de venir à moi et je te suis et je suis devant toi pour t'arrêter pour te donner toutes les étoiles du ciel en un baiser sur les yeux tous les baisers du monde en une étoile sur la bouche.

Bien à toi en flambeau.

P.S.--Je voudrais un bottin pour la messe un bottin avec une corde à noeuds pour marquer les pages. Tu m'apportes aussi un drapeau franco-allemand que je le plante sur le terrain vague. Et une livre de chocolat Menier avec la petite fille qui colle les affiches (je ne me rappelle plus). Et puis encore neuf de ces petites filles avec leur avocats et leurs juges et tu viens dans le train spécial avec la vitesse de la lumière et les brigands du Far-West qui me distrairont une minute qui saute ici malheureusement comme les bouchons de champagne. Et un patin. Ma bretelle gauche vient de casser je soulevais le monde comme une plume. Peux-tu me faire une commission achète un tank je veux te voir venir comme les fées.

SIMULATION OF GENERAL PARALYSIS ESSAYED (LEVY)

Thou my great one whom I adore beautiful as the whole earth and in the most beautiful stars of the earth that I adore thou my great woman adored by the powers of the stars beautiful with the beauty of the thousands of millions of queens who adorn the earth the adoration that I have for thy beauty brings me to my knees to beg thee to think of me I am brought to my knees I adore thy beauty think of me thou my adorable beauty my great beauty whom I adore I roll the diamonds in the moss loftier than the forest whose most lofty hair of thine think of me--forget me not my little woman when possible in ingle-nook on the sand of emerald--look at thyself in my hand that keeps me steadfast on the whole world so that thou mayest recognize me for what I am my dark-fair woman my beautiful one my foolish one think of me in paradises my head in my hands.

They were not enough for me the hundred and twenty castles where we were going to love one another tomorrow they shall build me a hundred thousand more I have hunted forests of baobabs from thine eyes peacocks panthers and lyre-birds I will shut them up in my strongholds and we will go and walk together in the forests of Asia Europe America that surround our castles in the admirable forests of thine eyes that are used to my splendour.

Thou hast not to wait for the surprise that I want to give thee for thine anniversary that falls today the same day as mine--I give it to thee at once since I have waited fifteen times for the year one thousand before giving thee the surprise of asking thee to think of me in hide-and-seek--I want thee laughing to think of me my young eternal woman. Before falling to sleep I have counted clouds and clouds of chariots full of beets for the sun and I want to bring thee to the astrakan shore that is being built on two horizons for thine eyes of petrol to wage war I will lead thee by paths of diamonds paved with primroses with emeralds and the cloak of ermine that I want to cover thee with is a bird of prey the diamonds that thy feet shall tread I got them cut in the shape of a butterfly.

Think of me whose only thought is the glory wherein the dazzling wealth of an earth and all the skies that I have conquered for thee slumber I adore thee and I adore thine eyes and I have opened thine eyes open to all those whom they have seen and I will give to all the beings whom thine eyes have seen raiment of gold and crystal raiment that they must cast away when thine eyes have tarnished them with their disdain. I bleed in my heart at the very initials of thy name that are all the letters beginning with Z in the infinity of alphabets and civilizations where I will love thee still since thou are willing to be my woman and to think of me in the countries where there is no mean.

My heart bleeds on thy mouth and closes on thy mouth on all the red chestnut trees of the avenue of thy mouth where we are on our way through the shining dust to lie us down amidst the meteors of thy beauty that I adore my great one who are so beautiful that I am happy to adorn my treasures with thy presence with thy thought and with thy name that multiplies the facets of the ecstasy of treasures with thy name that I adore because it wakes an echo in all the mirrors of beauty of my splendour my original woman my scaffolding of rose-wood thou art the fault of my fault of my very great fault as Jesus Christ is the woman of my cross--twelve times twelve thousand one hundred and forty-nine times I have loved thee with passion on the way and I am crucified to north east west and north for thy kiss of radium and I want thee and in my mirror of pearls thou art the breath of him who shall not rise again to the surface and who loves thee in adoration my woman lying upright when thou art seated combing thyself.

Thou art coming thou thinkest of me thou art coming on thy thirteen full legs and on all thine empty legs that beat the air with the swaying of thine arms a multitude of arms that want to clasp me kneeling between thy legs and thine arms to clasp me without fear lest my locomotives should prevent thee from coming to me and I am thou and I am before thee to stop thee to give thee all the stars of the

sky in one kiss on thine eyes all the kisses of the world in one star on thy mouth.

Thine in flames.

P.S.--I would like a Street Directory for mass a Street Directory with a knotted cord to mark the place. Bring also a Franco-german flag that I may plant it in No Man's Land. And a pound of that chocolate with the little girl who sticks the placards (I forget). And then again nine of those little girls with their lawyers and their judges and come in the special train with the speed of light and the outlaws of the Far West to distract me for a moment who am popping here unfortunately like champagne corks. The left strap of my braces has just broken I was lifting the world as though it were a feather. Canst thou do something for me buy a tank I want to see thee coming like fairies.

AN ATTEMPT TO SIMULATE GENERAL PARALYSIS (HOWARD)

My great big adorable girl beautiful as everything upon earth and in the most beautiful stars of the earth I adore, my great big girl adored by all the powers of the stars, lovely with the beauty of the billions of queens that adorn the earth, my adoration for your beauty brings me to my knees to beg you to think of me, I throw myself at your knees, I adore your beauty, think of me, my adorable beauty, my great beauty whom I adore, I roll diamonds in the moss higher than the forests your highest hair thinks of me--don't forget me, my little girl, on my knees now, beside the fire, on the emerald sand--look at yourself in my hand which serves me as a mirror of everything in the world for you to recognize me for what I am, my blonde-brunette, my beauty and my beast, think of me in paradise, my head in my hands.

I didn't have enough of the hundred and fifty chateaux where we went to make love, tomorrow I will have a hundred thousand others constructed, I have hunted peacocks, panthers, and lyre-birds in the baobab forests of your eyes, I will imprison them in my strongholds and we shall walk together in the forests of Asia, of Europe, of America which surround our chateaux in the admirable forests of your eyes which are accustomed to my splendor.

You have only to await the surprise I want to give you for your birthday which happens to be today, the same day as mine--I am giving it to you right away bedause fifteen times over I've waited for the year one thousand before giving you the surprise of asking you to think of me, of

hide-and-seek--I want you to think of me, my eternal girl, laughing. I have counted, before going to sleep, clouds and clouds of tanks full of beets for the sun, and I want to take you at night to the astrakan beach that they are building with two horizons for your wartime petroleum eyes, I'll take you there down roads of diamonds paved with primroses, emeralds, and the ermine cloak I want to dress you in is a bird of prey, the diamonds that your feet will trample I have had cut in the shape of butterflies. Think of me thinking only of your luster, in which slumbers the sun-drenched luxury of an earth and of all the stars I have conquered for you, I adore you and I adore your eyes and I have opened your eyes, open to all those they have seen and I shall give to all the beings your eyes have seen clothes of gold and crystal, clothes they must fling down when your eyes will have tarnished them with their scorn. I am bleeding in my heart from the mere initials of your name which are all the letters and of which Z is the first in the infinite of alphabets and civilizations in which I shall still love you since you want to be my wife and think of me in the countrie where there is no longer any average. My heart bleeds upon your mouth and closes over your mouth, over all the pink chestnut trees of the avenue of your mouth where we are going, in the brilliant dust, to lie down among the meteors of your beauty which I adore, my great big lovely creature, so lovely that I am happy to deck my treasures in your presence, your thought and your name which multiplies the facets of the ecstasy of my treasures, of your name I adore because it finds an echo in all the mirrors of beauty of my splendor, my original wife, my rosewood scaffolding, you are my sin of my sin of my great sin as Jesus Christ is the wife of my cross--twelve time twelve thousand one hundred and forty-nine times I have loved you with passion on the way and I am crucified in the north, the east, the west, and the north for your radium kiss, and I want you and you are in my mirror of pearls the breath of the man who loves you in adoration my wife lying down standing when you are sitting and combing your hair.

You will come, you are thinking of me, you will come, you will run to me on your thirteen full legs and on all your empty legs which beat the air with the swaying of your arms, a multitude of arms that will seek to entwine themselves around me kneeling between your legs and your arms to embrace you without fear that my locomotives will keep you from coming to me, and I am yours and I am before you to stop you, to give you all the stars of the sky in a kiss on your eyes all the world's kisses in a star on your mouth. Yours in a torch.

P.S. I'd like a directory for the mass, a directory with a knotted cord to mark the pages. You can also bring me a Franco-german flag that I will set up in the empty lot. And a pound of Menier chocolate with the little girl who pastes

up the posters (I don't remember any more). And then also nine of those little girls with their lawyers and their judges, and you are coming in the express train with the speed of light and the Wild West outlaws who will distract me a moment which explodes here unfortunately like champagne corks. And a skate. My left garter has just broken, I was lifting the world like a feather. Can you do me a favor? Buy a tank, I want to see you coming like the fairies.

SIMULATION OF GENERAL PARALYSIS ESSAYED

My grand adored one beautiful like everything on earth and in the most beautiful stars of the earth that I adore my great woman adored by all the powers of the stars beautiful with the beauty of thousands of millions of queens who adorn the earth the adoration that I have for your beauty brings me to my knees to beg you to think of me I kneel before your knees I adore your beauty think of me you my adorable beauty my grand beauty who I adore I roll diamonds in the moss higher than the forests whose highest hair of yours thinks of me--do not forget me my little woman on my knees whenever possible in the corner of the fire on the emerald sand--look at yourself in my hand that gives me a base over the whole world so that you may recognize me for what I am my brunette blond woman, my beauty and my bovine think of me in paradises your head in my hands.

I did not have enough of the one hundred and fifty fortresses where we were going to make love to each other tomorrow they will build me one hundred thousand others I hunted forests of baobabs from your eyes peacocks panthers and lyre-birds I will enclose them in my strong fortresses and we will go we will walk together in the forests of Asia of Europe of Africa of America which encircle our fortresses in the admirable forests of your eyes that are accustomed to my splendour.

You do not have to wait for the surprise that I want to relay for your birthday which falls today the same day as mine--I give it to you right away since I have waited fifteen times for the year one thousand before giving you the surprise of asking you to think of me playing hide-and-seek--I want you to think of me my young eternally laughing woman. I have counted before falling asleep clouds and clouds of carts full of beets for the sun and I want to take you at night on the astrakan beach that someone is constructing on two horizons for your eyes of petrol to wage carnage I will conduct you there by roads of diamonds paved with primroses of emeralds and the ermine coat with which I want to cover you is a bird of prey the diamonds that your feet forge I had them formed in a butterfly figure. Think of me who only dreams of your sparkle where slumbers the sun covered

luxury from an earth and from every one of the stars that I have conquered for you I adore you and I adore your eyes and I opened your eyes opened to all those whom they have seen and I will give to all the beings who your eyes have seen clothing of gold and crystal clothing that they will have to discard when your eyes will have made a stain on them with their disdain. I bleed in my heart at the initials of your name which are all the letters starting with Z in the infinity of alphabets and of civilizations where I will love you still since you want to be my woman and to think of me in the countries where there is no more a mean. My heart bleeds on your mouth on all the pink chestnut trees on the avenue of your mouth where we are going in the shining dust to lie in the meteor of your beauty that I adore my great creature so beautiful that I am happy to adorn my treasures with your presence with your perception and with your name that multiplies the facets of ecstasy of my treasures with your name that I adore because it finds an echo in all the mirrors of beauty of my splendour my original woman my scaffolding of rosewood you are my woe of my woe of my great woe like Jesus Christ is the woman of my crimes--twelve times twelve thousand one hundred and forty-nine times I have loved you with passion on the way and I am crucified to the north to the east to the west and to the north for your kisses of radium and I want you and you are in my mirror of pearls the breath of the man who will not mount you again at the surface and who loves you in adoration my woman lying upright when you are seated combing your hair.

You will come you think of me you will come on your thirteen full legs and on all the empty legs which bat the air with the balance of your arms a multitude of arms that want to grasp me kneeling between your legs and your arms to grasp me without fear that my locomotives will stop you from coming to me and I am you and I am in front of you to stop you to give you all the sky in a kiss of the eyes all the kisses of the world in a star on the curve of your lips.

Yours in flames.

P.S.--I would like a directory for mass a directory with a cord to mark the pages. Bring me also a French-German flag that I may plant it in empty land. And a pound of Menier chocolate with the little girl who pastes up posters (I do not remember any more). And then again nine of these little girls with their lawyers and their judges and you come in the special train with the speed of light and the robbers of the Far West who distract me for a moment who jumps here unhappily like the chain of champagne. And a skate. My left braces' strap just broke I was lifting the world like a feather. Can you do something for me buy a tank I fancy glimpsing you gathering like fairies.

Perhaps the most notable technical difference between the first two of the three secondary texts is the arbitrary insertion of punctuation in I^{tr2}. This textual interference is the result of the intrusion of conscious interlingual logic and it introduces a foreign element into the work. Punctuation is a consciously imposed device used to effect a break or a pause in thought. It imposes form and consequently decreases the chances of free exploratory association. While punctuation makes the text easier to read, it is still only a somewhat less objectionable form of the textual reduction advocated by Mary Ann Caws. This type of reduction at best will limit the journey into the unconscious dimension for the reader; at worst it may stop the associative processes entirely and bring him back down to a connotative level of comprehension. Some of the keys to the quest in L'Immaculée Conception are the fractured sentence structures, the increasing emphasis on sound values and the juxtaposition of seemingly contradictory or incomprehensible images. When any of these keys are altered to conform with conscious logic, the reader's own conscious, analytical powers are immediately recalled and he may begin to analyse the text before he responds to it instead of after.

Even stronger examples of manipulative textual mutilation or reduction are evident in I^{tr1} when words and entire phrases mysteriously disappear from the secondary text. The original French read "J'ai compté . . . la nuit sur la plage d'astrakan . . . de papillon" (p. 40), but in the English version, "la nuit" was omitted and stands: "Before falling to sleep . . . to the astrakan shore . . . butterfly figure." A second example of such an omission occurs in the last paragraph

(p. 42), when "Et un patin" disappears completely from the text. Lévy also ignores the negation ne . . . plus (p. 41), choosing to render it simply as no, rather than no longer or no more and thus immediately destroys certain associative and even denotative values. The order inherent in the unconscious mind which was discussed in Chapter II cannot be expected to withstand conscious deletion of certain elements or images.

The destruction of associative values is also apparent in I^{tr3} when "on m'en construira" (p. 39) is rendered as "someone is building." While the I^{tr1} and I^{tr2} substitutions "that they shall build" and "that they are building" respectively are acceptable (although I^{tr1} is perhaps grammatically closer to the original), I^{tr3} has inserted an unnecessarily specific word which could well limit the reader's associations.

One major and inexcusable problem which occurs in the secondary texts is that of textual misreading. In I^{tr2}, "Tu n'as pas à attendre la surprise que je veux . . . en riant" (p. 40), is changed to "you have only to await the surprise that I . . . laughing." Further on in the text Howard makes a questionable decision and renders "pour tes yeux de petrole à faire la guerre" (p. 40), as "for your wartime petroleum eyes." Changes of this nature can redirect the journey simply because the secondary text says something which the primary text did not.

Although there are several other intentional and unintentional intrusions and reductions of the text, these like the ones noted above could easily be rectified through a careful reading of the source text and an equally careful interpretative translation.

Many of the remaining underlinings in the three secondary texts pertain mainly to very minor changes in vocabulary. "Femme," for example, appears frequently throughout the source text. In I^{tr1} and I^{tr3}, femme is translated by woman while in I^{tr2} it is translated as wife. Neither of these replacements is either right or wrong, since they are both merely slightly different interpretations of a highly associative symbol. Such differences must be expected whenever referentiality is removed. These words which are undoubtedly quite different on denotative and connotative levels (and frequently are not interchangeable) are viable on the associative level. The words in the secondary texts are not, in this case, so far removed as to suggest completely disjunct sets. Presumably, therefore, the R^4 will be able to follow the same associative process as did the readers of the primary texts, assuming three things: (a) that neither R^3 nor R^4 indulges in the escapist techniques of reduction-oriented critics/readers; (b) that the passages are not based entirely or even primarily on sound values; and (c) that the R^4 remembers that he is to try to understand the text through free association and that he should respond to it before he searches for meaning using his conscious mind.

Unfortunately for translators, automatic writing is usually based to a large extent on sound. If, as in I^{tr1} and I^{tr2}, the symbols are chosen for their relationship to the denotative values of the symbol the reader attempts to search for sense on the denotative level. Even if he remembers that he is supposed to respond with free association, the effort to remember constantly introduces the

conscious mind. In I^{tr3}, sound equivalency was given priority over sense-oriented symbols and it is for this reason that I^{tr3} shows greater divergence from I^{tr1} or I^{tr2} than I^{tr1} or I^{tr2} do from each other. However, in allotting priority in this way, some of the content connections are lost and I^{tr3} may be guilty of redirecting thought. For example, in the primary text the word "croix" rhymes with "fois," but this rhyme cannot be denotatively translated into English. Therefore, in I^{tr3} the word "croix" was replaced by "crimes." Crimes can be related to cross via the idea of bearing a cross for crimes/sins committed, but it is certainly not the closest synonym for the French word "croix." A similar situation occurs with the line "Tu n'as pas . . . que je veux te faire pour ton anniversaire . . . en riant." Literally translated this would be read as: "You do not have to wait for the surprise that I want to give you for your birthday." However, if the sound effect is to be translated, the sentence could not be translated literally and would have to be re-worked as in "You do not have to wait for the surprise that I want to relay for your birthday . . . woman." Likewise, in order to transfer sound values, "faire la guerre" should rhyme in English, as in "wage carnage," rather than "to make war," which would be a more literal equivalent.

Alliteration may also prove to be somewhat difficult to translate into a second language while retaining a literal translation. One very definite example of this problem can be found in the sentence: "Peux-tu me faire une commission achète un tank je veux te voir venir comme les fées," for in a translation which concentrates upon replacing the French symbols with their closest English denotative

symbol the alliteration is lost. For example, "Canst thou do something for me buy a tank I want to see thee coming like fairies" (I^{trl}). Even in the more sound-oriented I^{tr3} the alliteration is not as evident, for it reads: "Can you do something for me buy a tank I fancy glimpsing you gathering like fairies." By accentuating sound more than content, the translator risks straying too far from the inherent, unconscious order of the text, since he employs conscious analysis to achieve the sound equivalencies. Unfortunately, there is no way of avoiding this intrusion.

For precisely this reason, I would like to suggest that each piece of automatic writing be translated in two ways. The first should pay close attention to the sound of the text and the ways in which this sound is manipulated, and/or changed. The translator should then attempt to capture the sound orientation in his translation. The second translation would be similar to those of Lévy and Shattuck where the symbols are chosen for their relationship to the denotative level of the primary symbol. In this way, the uni-lingual reader of the secondary text could first of all experience the sound and then <u>after</u> the initial experience he could attempt a conscious analysis to see if the conscious and the unconscious paradigms do have some degree of overlap. If they do, then the quest which the Surrealists undertook to see if they could find some point where all things ceased to be understood as contradictions would have been, at least partially, successful.

Ideally, <u>L'Immaculée Conception</u> should be interpreted or--to avoid rhetorical arguments--translated as many times as possible by as many

people as possible; practically it should be translated at least twice so that the uni-lingual reader of the secondary texts will not be unduly influenced by the mediating influence of the translator on the images produced by Breton and Eluard or by the translator's personal interpretation of the work.

The reading of translations can also be beneficial for literary critics and others who are interested in L'Immaculée Conception, for if used in a comparative study, such translated texts may lead the readers to a greater understanding of the work and they may aid these readers in their own exploratory quest for an understanding of the quest in L'Immaculée Conception. They may, through the in-depth reading which translation requires, find that point where all things (in this case symbols and images) cease to be perceived as contradictions, where man and his unconscious may be reconciled.

NOTES

[1] André Breton and Paul Eluard, L'Immaculée Conception (Paris: Seghers, 1961), p. 11; all subsequent references in this chapter are to this edition.

[2] May Ann Caws, "Antonin Artaud: Suppression and Sub-text," in About French Poetry from Dada to Tel Quel, ed. Mary Ann Caws (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1974), pp. 254-272.

[3] Roy Campbell, trans., Poems of Baudelaire (New York: Pantheon Books, 1952), p. 188.

[4] In this text S refers to Source while R refers to Receptor/ Receiver.

[5] Julien Levy, Surrealism (New York: The Black Sun Press, 1936), pp. 119-120.

[6] Maurice Nadeau, History of Surrealism, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Macmillan, 1965), pp. 280-282.

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